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Focus: **Aid under fire**

relief & development in an unstable world

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Abbreviations

$	US$
CED	Complex Emergencies Division
CESU	Complex Emergencies Support Unit
DMTP	Disaster Management Training Programme
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
Federation	The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IASU	Inter-Agency Support Unit
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDNDR	International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets
NIS	Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union
OAS	Organisation of American States
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
UNDAC	UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNHCR	Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNV	UN Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Focus: Aid under fire

Relief and development in an unstable world

Preface

by Peter Hansen, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs

The challenge of working in situations of actual or unresolved conflict is not new, but it has a greater impetus and commands more attention today than in the past. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is particularly concerned with this debate, and for that reason *co-sponsored* a recent seminar at Wilton Park, in the United Kingdom, to allow for a frank and open exchange of views from representatives of humanitarian agencies as well as concerned Governments.

In this edition of *DHA News* we have invited academics and practitioners to focus on the key issue of humanitarian assistance in situations of conflict. Not everybody will agree with everything that is said in the following pages. Like the views expressed at Wilton Park, the articles which follow are intended to push forward the debate by provoking responses.

Two fundamental questions dominate the debate. Firstly, how can we better *adapt* relief and development processes to ensure a greater synergy between the two? How can we direct policy, programme activities, training, evaluation and funding to provide for this synergy? Secondly, how can we achieve the sometimes different objectives of humanitarian and human rights actors in a way that honours the common principles of both?.

These two questions emerge in virtually all of the major humanitarian crises today. A greater understanding of the complexity of those crises and of the different roles of each of the actors must lead to improved performance. This in turn will assure us of a better chance for a more secure world in which peoples and governments are free to pursue, in peace, the search for a better future.

Introduction

The optimism for peace inspired by the end of the Cold War has not been realised in practice. Rather the momentum for violent conflict appears to be growing, and the global map of war is changing as new zones of instability emerge, for example in the former Soviet Union. Contemporary conflicts often lead to complex humanitarian emergencies. In 1995 the United Nations identified 28 complex emergencies, affecting some 60 million people. War, political instability and the collapse of state institutions are the defining features of these humanitarian crises.

Conflict is clearly not a new phenomenon, but it has become more visible. In the post-Cold War era, media coverage of conflict and its aftermath has become widespread. We live in the age of the soundbite, where images of human suffering compete for airtime. Meanwhile, the international community is stretching the boundaries of possibility for both military and humanitarian intervention in conflict situations. The increasing scale of international engagement in conflict situations has brought with it new pressures on relief and development agencies.

This special focus issue of *DHA News* builds on a recent seminar convened by DHA in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute and ACTIONAID to examine the role of relief and development assistance in an unstable world. The agenda is complex – extending from the realm of geopolitics to practical issues of professionalism and security. The articles that follow sketch the anchor points of current debates concerning aid in conflict situations.

The changing nature of war and aid

There is a perception that instability is increasing across the world, particularly in Africa and in the former eastern bloc. In contrast to an earlier generation of wars, which were shaped by the logic of the Cold War and centred around the state, contemporary conflicts appear to be more fragmented, and often defined in terms of nationalism and ethnicity. This, in turn, tests the capacity of state structures to manage internal conflicts. As we approach the next millennium, the international community is asking itself how far existing political and aid structures can be expected to mediate and respond to social and political instability.

The human and financial costs of war are enormous. Those who pay the price most directly are, of course, the affected communities themselves. But the operational agencies and donor community are also feeling the impact, as aid flows to conflict situations increase.

It is frequently suggested that a significant shift in the allocation of official development assistance (ODA) is taking place: the amount of ODA allocated to relief by OECD countries rose from less than $500 million in 1980 to more than $3500 million in 1993.

This shift may reflect the increasing number of complex emergencies to which donors respond. But it may also represent changing political priorities in donor countries, as they seek to react to the intense media pressure that complex emergencies generate. It is important to emphasise that despite the dramatic increase in relief expenditure, there is still an enormous need for emergency aid, particularly in conflict-affected countries.

It is also worth noting that, in many instances, a substantial proportion of emergency aid is provided from donor countries' contingency budgets – making the accusation that relief is coming at the 'cost' of development difficult to sustain. But the rising share of relief expenditures is taking place at a time when overall overseas development assistance is declining. In this context, there is a deficit in both relief and development assistance.

Photo: C. Sattlberger/UNHCR

Redefining relief and development assistance

There is a growing debate over the linkages between relief and development. Until recently, the 'continuum' between relief and development was usually defined in linear terms. Disasters and emergencies, including those caused by conflict, were perceived as temporary interruptions in an otherwise progressive development process.

This view is increasingly being challenged. The idea of a 'linear' continuum does not reflect the chronic nature of conflict and vulnerability in many countries. Nor does it acknowledge the weaknesses in the development process itself, which has not given sufficient attention to building the capacity of developing countries to deal effectively with the 'shocks' of instability and conflict. Any suggestion, therefore, that the principles of development can be uncritically transferred into the domain of relief should be treated with some caution.

Related to the question of the links between relief and development is an emerging debate over the role of ODA in conflict management. This has been the subject of policy documents from both the UN and the OECD. The concept of human security, along with that of sustainable development, has emerged as an important element in the aid policy dialogue.

These "new" concepts are being introduced within a context of dramatic changes in the international political and military environments following the end of the Cold War. The humanitarian boundaries of

The humanitarian boundaries of the aid system are becoming increasingly blurred.

the international aid system are becoming increasingly blurred as they extend into areas of governance, peace-keeping, and global environmental management.

In recent years these issues have been the subject of vigorous debate within the aid and foreign policy communities. Often, however, discussion remains within individual institutions, and divided between relief and development practitioners. A proliferation of new terms and concepts has developed to describe and respond to a changing world order. Common definitions and meanings are frequently elusive. This lack of consensus over terminology reflects a broader uncertainty as to the nature of the problem. Is the problem one essentially of technical inefficiency, or is it rather the failure of the essential paradigms of humanitarianism, developmentalism and modernisation?

Confronting the issues

The Wilton Park meeting marked the beginnings of a process of debate which seeks to build consensus. But before the international community can actually do anything about improving the way it responds to conflict-related emergencies, it needs to address some key questions.

First – and a vital prerequisite to improvements in operational performance – we need to fill the gaps in our understanding of the causes and nature of conflict. This is easier said than done. There is, however, a good deal of work that can be, and is being, done by the academic community to fill these gaps. A well-targeted 'case study' approach would probably the most effective means of examining the issues. Conflict, instability and tension are extremely variable phenomena. It is very difficult to compare instability in societies as different as those of Bosnia and Burundi. But by looking at the underlying reasons for, and the nature of, conflict in specific countries or areas, it should be possible to avoid falling into the trap of generalisation.

Second, we need to improve the ways in which information and analysis of the causes and effects of instability are transferred from researchers to policy-makers. Decision-makers in the aid community, both in recipient and donor countries, need a better understanding of the problems they face, to help cope with them more effectively.

One way to open up lines of communication between thinkers and practitioners is to bring people from different sectors (for example, governments, UN agencies, the academic world, and the NGOs) together, to identify and discuss key issues. The Wilton Park conference provided a platform for such dialogue: this special edition of *DHA News* is attempting to disseminate some of the ideas that came out of that conference to a wider audience.

A third key issue is the major gap in the aid community's operational ability to respond to instability and conflict. We are beginning to know what we would like to achieve in conflict mitigation, management and resolution. But we much less confident about how to do it. To put it simply, we lack the 'tool-kit' to put our ideas into practice. Many different players – politicians, diplomats, the UN and its agencies and NGOs – would like to be involved. Each group offers a different range of skills and experience. We now need to identify and build on the techniques in conflict management that those groups have developed over the years. We also need to examine which organisations or individuals have a comparative advantage in working in different regions and in specific scenarios.

For example, the major NGOs, with their long experience of working with communities in developing countries, may be best placed to develop 'grass-roots' approaches to defusing tension and tackling instability. Meanwhile international,

particularly regional, organisations are best able to handle 'top-down' political negotiation.

Fourth is the issue of linking relief and development assistance in situations of instability or conflict. There is a divergence of view between those who believe that emergency relief aid – particularly in unstable conditions should concentrate solely on saving and preserving life; and those who consider it essential to build a 'developmental' approach into emergency assistance. In a sense, this debate is over the 'purity' of emergency aid.

Emergency aid 'purists' can, for example, argue that the essential impartiality and unconditionality of humanitarian assistance can only be guaranteed by the delivery of straightforward 'welfare' services (such as food aid, primary health care and temporary shelter). Those who take a more 'developmental' approach believe that it is important to build elements usually found in development programmes (e.g.: gender awareness, institutional support) into emergency relief. These divergent views need to be considered by those involved operationally in emergency aid, and a consensus reached that will at least stop differing approaches becoming detrimental to the effective delivery of relief.

Photo: L. Stoop/ICRC

Regulating the response

Finally, there is growing agreement in the international aid community that there should be greater regulation of the activities of agencies operating in the field in complex emergencies. The increased scale and widespread media coverage of humanitarian crises has led in the past few years to the proliferation of new, often very small agencies, which set themselves up to respond to one particular emergency. This has been particularly notable in the recent emergencies in former-Yugoslavia and on the Rwanda/Zaire border.

Problems caused by proliferation include difficulties in tracking and co-ordinating agency activities, concerns about standards of service of inexperienced organisations and over-provision in particular sectors. It has been suggested that performance standards should be set by the emergency aid community to augment the existing 'Code of Conduct' for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and NGOs, which would encourage a higher level of professionalism in the field.

Confronting the new world disorder

The end of the Cold War brought with it expectations that a "New World Order" was imminent. The old security threats, which consumed inordinately large national expenditures and preoccupied the global community for 45 years, had diminished with astonishing rapidity.

This was to be the time for "beating swords into ploughshares" and for redirecting much-needed investment capital to human development both at home and abroad. The problems of underdevelopment, environmental degradation, population growth and governance could now be tackled vigorously in a new partnership between the North and the South, freed from the manipulation of East-West political competition.

However, the world has not turned out the way many of our leaders had envisioned or hoped. For better or worse, the world was much more focused and much more proactive during the Cold War because of the threat, real or perceived, posed by totalitarianism. Crises could be managed more easily, largely because there were international rules of the games that the superpowers, for the most part, followed. Despite the fact that these rules were often tested to the limit, the line was never crossed. This produced relative peace, stability and global prosperity for nearly 40 years.

New bureaucracies were created and others restructured to manage the Cold War. The tools we developed to manage that era of global history are still with us. If it is difficult to change the tools to deal with the new international realities, it is even more difficult to change the mindset of bureaucracies – be they bilateral or multilateral.

The end of the Cold War brought with it the unravelling of many nation-states, the leadership of which no longer had the resources or capacity to maintain themselves in power. The development challenges we face today are much different from the Cold War era. It requires an approach that differs considerably from the traditional development focus and our current definition of national security.

Among the post-Cold War challenges confronting the international community is the emergence of complex emergencies, many of which have revealed ethnic, religious, cultural or nationalistic tensions. If the international community is to organise itself to effectively engage in crisis prevention, mitigation and management, we need to give better definition to all the elements of the problems which confront us.

Diagnosis is just the first step

Developing an early warning capability on the political, ethnic and cultural tensions within any society which can escalate into violent confrontation and hasten the disintegration of states can be an important element of crisis prevention. However, the role of various players, including external actors and influences, can affect the success or failure of crisis prevention efforts.

For example, in Somalia the international community launched the first post-Cold War experiment in nation-building. This effort included the reconstitution of strong central government institutions which had provoked the civil conflict in the first place.

This strategy worked at cross purposes with, and even undermined, the Somali clan structure which had historically operated as a consensus-building/reconciliation mechanism. The warlords were consequently empowered as individuals, at the expense of the traditional structures, which were highly democratic in a traditional sense. In the end, UNOSOM became an unwitting party to the conflict.

Therefore, any early warning system has to take account of not only internal sources of conflict, but

There is a need to reconcile short-term foreign policy considerations with the goal of stability and sustainable development.

also the capacity of external actors to exacerbate the potential for conflict.

Prevention: a bitter pill

In regions of the world such as Africa, donor programmes have to be restructured in a way that not only address the problems of environmental degradation, poverty alleviation, governance, population and stagnant economic growth, but also in mitigating ethnic, religious and cultural tensions within society.

Often, religious and ethnic tensions become full-blown conflicts over the issue of who monopolises the national political and economic power of a country. Once again, external forces play an important role in influencing whether or not these tensions are controlled or defused. There is a need to reconcile the mandates of traditional foreign policy agencies for managing government-to-government political and economic relations (short-term foreign policy considerations) with the necessity to deal with and ameliorate the faultlines within many societies (the goal of long-term stability and sustainable development).

Of equal importance is the need to ensure there is synergy in the foreign policies of all the external actors in a given country or region. Crisis prevention will be difficult under the best of circumstances. It will be impossible if external actors are pursuing contradictory or conflicting foreign policy agendas.

The current crisis in the Great Lakes region of Africa is a test of the international community's resolve in reconciling conflicting foreign policy agendas in the interest of mitigating or managing the current crisis and preventing the next cycle of ethnic violence. It is one of the global community's worst-kept secrets that arms flowing to ex-Rwandan government forces in Zaire not only contributes to the continuance of that conflict, but also guarantees the eventual recurrence of widespread violence.

While donors demand transparency and accountability on the part of their development partners, the time is long past for transparency and accountability to be demanded of external actors as well. The end of the Cold War should have brought an end to the notion of spheres of political, economic and cultural influence.

The great strides made in decolonisation in the aftermath of World War II should not be replaced by less direct forms of colonisation in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Good surgery aids recovery

Once a complex emergency erupts, the problem becomes one of effective management and co-ordination of the emergency relief and subsequent rehabilitation efforts. How these efforts are implemented will determine whether or not a solid foundation for sustainable reconstruction/development can be built.

There are serious deficiencies in the international system. For example, the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been given a coordination mandate without any enforcement capability.

Equally problematical, however, is the seeming inability of donors to collaboratively structure relief and rehabilitation efforts in a way that the root causes of conflict are addressed. This entails focusing resources not only within a traditional relief and rehabilitation framework, but in such a manner that effectively ameliorates ethnic, religious or cultural tensions. Reconstituting national institutions alone will not mitigate this problem. Focusing on reconciliation and empowerment at the local level may.

Often, short-term relief and rehabilitation responses do not reflect strategic analysis or planning to avoid the next conflict, By

Photo: L. Taylor/UNHCR

failing to do so, the international community may, in effect, be planting the seeds for the next round of blood-letting.

Once the conflict has ended and there is a secure environment for the repatriation of refugees, there remains a major gap that needs to be addressed – and that is the issue of sustainable reintegration.

UNHCR is preoccupied with refugee repatriation. Once refugees are repatriated to their communities of origin, UNHCR, under its mandate, is discharged of further responsibility. However, in the absence of a sustainable reintegration programme, repatriation of refugees can become a source of internal instability which, in turn, could lead to violent confrontation. Potentially, we could be back to square one.

A new health service for the global village

In all honesty, the international system has not adapted to the new realities confronting us in many regions of the world. In many cases, mandates that were developed to respond to the colonial and post-colonial era have not been adapted to the challenges now facing the global community. Institutions have not changed to reflect the changing nature of conflict from inter-state to intra-state.

Unfortunately, the system suffers from too many institutions specialised in responding to crises of the past which bear little resemblance to the crises of the present and those we can expect in the future. Feifdoms have been built up which are unwilling to be coordinated and often pursuing agendas that conflict with effective relief and rehabilitation efforts that need to be carried out within the new reality and challenges facing us all.

One gets the same sense that the pursuit of resources drives far too many institutions. With declining resources for development and sizeable resources devoted to complex emergencies, agencies are packaging programmes in order to capture humanitarian relief dollars. It is not only time to review the mandates of all institutions involved in humanitarian relief and rehabilitation efforts in order to rationalise the system more effectively, but it is also time to really decide which institutions are no longer relevant to the challenges posed by reality.

Richard McCall
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Managing the external crisis

The post-Cold War era is being shaped by two underlying trends. The international economy is becoming increasingly regionalised and polarised. At the same time, the social problems which result from this polarisation are being dealt with more often by non-governmental organisations.

Earlier ideals of global multilateralism have been tempered by the emergence of assertive regional economic blocks. However, notions of societal convergence, which underpinned the creation of the European Economic Community in the 1960s, have weakened. Public policy has had to grapple with the social consequences of growing economic polarisation.

Paradoxically, the rationale of economics sees opportunities for development and trade in exploiting the very differences created by this polarisation. Large development gaps now structure relations between the three member states of the North American Free Trade Area, for example. This is also the case in the emerging regional arrangements in East Asia.

Comparative advantage, which the basis of international trade, derives largely from different levels of wages and prices. During the past decade, even the European Union has seen its commitment to parity and convergence falter as regional gaps have increased after narrowing until the 1970s. The neo-liberal emphasis on a wider rather than deeper Union looks set to continue this trend.

Increasing regional divergence is not the only example of divisions between western countries. Internal social and economic disparities have also begun to widen. This polarisation has been matched by an accelerating income gap between the countries which make up the main economic blocs and areas outside these trade zones, such as Africa, eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In a similar fashion, internal polarisation has fractured these non-bloc regions, in contrast to the period up to the 1970s, when many planned and post-colonial societies had been making modest progress.

The second trend is the growing absence of governments in tackling the ills of economic polarisation. Market trickle-down theory has replaced promises of universal social provision. Persistent problems have increasingly been made the responsibility of non-governmental agencies.

Within western countries, internal social problems have been addressed by a growing number and range of voluntary agencies. They have expanded as the state has gradually withdrawn from welfare provision. A similar development has taken place in response to external crises. In this case however, structural adjustment policies have pushed governments to withdraw from the welfare sector. In this vacuum the influence of internationally-funded voluntary agencies, better known as non-governmental organisations, has also grown.

In many respects, the West is applying the same management tools to external development crises that it is using to deal with its internal social problems. But this similarity extends beyond organisational basics (the sub-contracting of public welfare activities to private bodies) to the general cultural determinism that informs both internal and external operations.

The spread of external safety-nets

The growing income gap between nations within economic blocs and non-bloc regions has induced an economic crisis in the latter. Modest development gains have been rolled back as conventional economies have declined. At the same time, political insecurity and ethnic tensions have increased.

The crisis in the Horn of Africa in the mid-1980s changed the way western countries responded to such distant events. Previously,

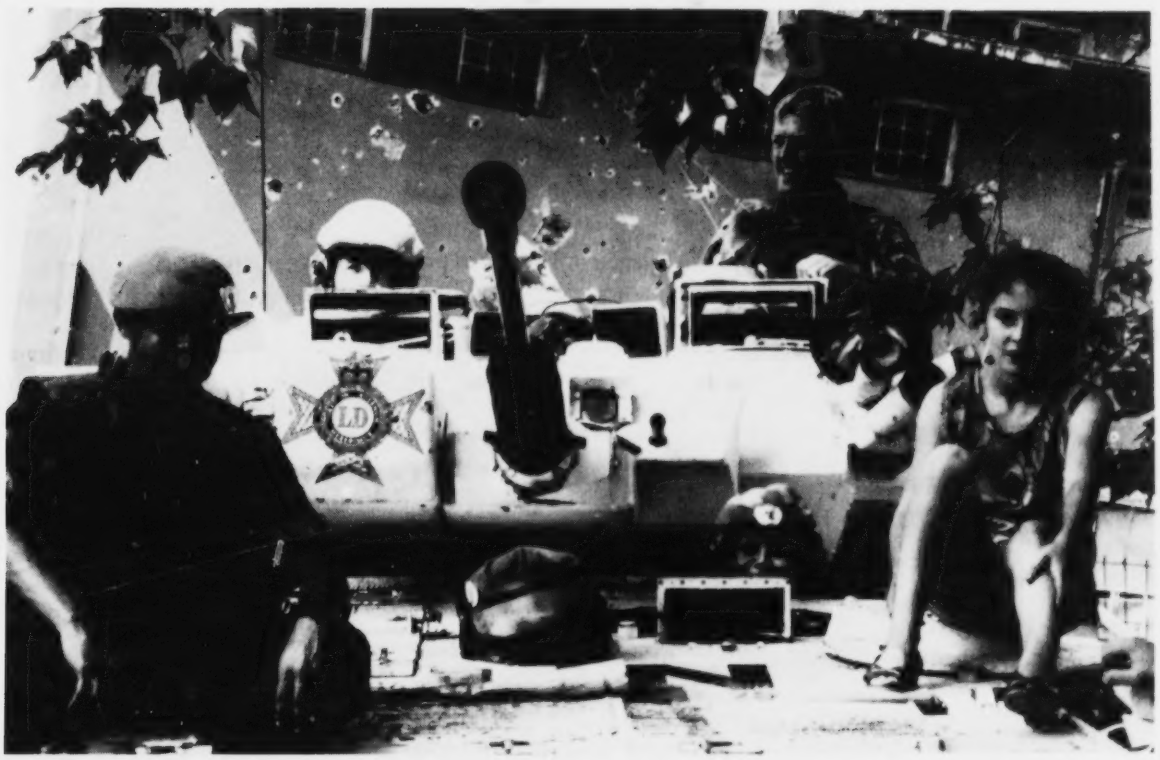

Photo: Morgan Lanham

humanitarian aid had usually been delivered by donors to recognised governments. While NGOs had existed for some time, the predominance of donor-government relations limited their development.

During the Horn crisis, which was defined by both drought and war, funding shifted away from recognised governments towards NGOs on grounds of efficiency and neutrality. During the civil war in Ethiopia, for example, not only were NGOs funded in preference to the Ethiopian Government but, for the first time, donors supported agencies working on both sides of the line. The developments had a historic impact. An aid market was established where none had existed before. Donor-government funding had previously followed Cold War determinants. The funding of private welfare agencies not only allowed an increasing role for the media, it established a growing competition among NGOs for contracts. And where donors supported agencies on both sides of a conflict (as in Ethiopia), they effectively participated in the erosion of the sovereignty of a recognised government.

All of these factors underpinned the subsequent expansion of donor/NGO welfare safety-nets throughout Africa during the latter part of the 1980s.

Working in conflict

The main obstacle to the expansion of the aid market has been conflict. Systemic economic crisis and associated political instability is linked to an increasing incidence of civil conflict in non-bloc areas. During the Cold War, the aid market was largely confined to areas controlled by recognised governments. Thanks to the end of the Cold War, and historic organisational and policy adaptations, aid workers are now found on the front line.

Negotiated access (securing the agreement of warring sides to allow the distribution of humanitarian aid) has established a conduit for

During the civil war in Ethiopia, for the first time, donors supported agencies working on both sides of the line.

aid market expansion. The primary organisational adaptation to this is the integrated UN programme. Apart from establishing a division of labour between UN specialist organisations and attempting to link relief and development activities, these programmes have also seen a major expansion in UN/NGO sub-contracting. Indeed, the expansion of the aid market in conflict situations has encouraged the appearance of a whole new generation of competing NGOs.

A number of institutional innovations, including the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, have accompanied these changes. Since the Gulf War, however, a series of *ad hoc* UN resolutions has promoted the military protection of humanitarian operations. This protection is, however, susceptible to strategic interests and domestic calculations. These same concerns have often undermined attempts at United Nations deployment and the coordination of mandated military forces.

A policy revolution

The expansion of the aid market is not the only major change in the West's attitude towards and method of dealing with external crises since the end of the Cold War. The emergence of integrated programmes, and especially military protection, indicates a new acceptance of protracted crises and of the necessity of providing aid in ongoing conflicts. Although the management of conflicts on the periphery is still largely *ad hoc*, its ideal features can be discerned:

a) A high priority is put on the containment of crises by preventing large-scale population movements across international borders. This has frequently required military involvement.

b) The delivery of aid to populations displaced and affected by conflict is primarily undertaken through negotiated access with the warring factions.

c) Negotiating access tends to legitimise warring parties. Groups so legitimised form the main elements in a peace process which, in most cases, tends to run parallel to the conflict.

In addition to saving lives, humanitarian aid has been used to manage crises. It provides a means of balance, reward and conditionality, but this has diluted the humanitarian purity of aid programmes. This loss of clarity of purpose is one reason for the increasing incidence of death and injury among aid workers.

System change

The adaptations in the management of protracted crises signal a move away from the conventions established after World War Two to regulate international relations. Ideas of collective responsibility have been sidelined in favour of regional and national interests. The number of operational instruments available to donor governments has increased. Legal mandates have been weakened in favour of the self-ascribed roles of multi-tasking NGOs. In sum, the expansion of the aid market has established the basis for a flexible and selective response to the external crisis by Western governments.

Recent ad hoc institutional adaptations represent in outline a new system of global governance. The response system, as is the case with the emerging response to the internal Western crisis, is marked by a shift from universal values in favour of the particular and the contingent. This is a move from collective responsibility in a converging world to a flexible system of 'just-in-time' crisis management in a fragmented and polarised hinterland.

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NGOs: humanitarian cure or curse?

The emergence of a media-dependent international crisis management industry is degrading the quality of humanitarian space. This transformation has been heralded by the deregulation of the humanitarian theatre and the creation of a market in which a proliferation of diverse agencies compete for contracts. In this new market, the humanitarian mandates of inter-governmental bodies are muddled with a myriad of contracted goods and services. Humanitarian action is therefore expressed in a Gordian knot of financial contracts, well beyond the reach of international humanitarian law and accountability.

Humanitarianism is probably best understood by reference to the body of international law that defines human rights in conflict. This consists primarily of the Geneva Convention and later protocols, the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, and, in Africa, the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention. Together, these place obligations upon governments for the protection of civilian populations upon governments, and upon two specialised institutions; the ICRC and UNHCR.

Humanitarian law mandates these organisations to monitor the performance of signatory states, and the associated statutory instruments provide some technical standards against which to judge humanitarian performance.

These legal instruments range from qualitative rights, such as protection from cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, to quantified standards on food, water, health and shelter. In the post-World War Two period, when most of these minimum standards were negotiated, contemporary opinion held that proper standards of accountability and control could only be met by government agencies. Therefore, humanitarian action became the near-exclusive domain of governments and inter-governmental authorities. In principle, accountability for meeting minimum standards was, at that time, a relatively straightforward matter. First, the actors in humanitarian crises were few, and audit trails were short. Second, these agencies operated under, and were explicitly named in, international treaties.

The humanitarian market

The emergence of the new humanitarian industry is a direct result of the neo-liberal philosophy embraced in the 1980s and the increased scope for international intervention in the post-Cold War era. On the demand side, Bernard Kouchner's formulation of the "right of interference" and the popularisation of Paulo Freire's theory of conscientisation are symbolic of the growing assertiveness of the private relief and development sectors. On the supply side, the introduction of commercial competitive tendering in most official aid programmes financed the massive growth in the NGO sector, particularly in the social service and welfare field.

This growth was encouraged by many northern donors to help fill the vacuum created by cuts in social welfare services resulting from economic adjustment policies. The retreat of the state, from guaranteeing national health, education and welfare norms (including emergency relief), has created numerous opportunities for the private sector, especially at the community level.

It is at this local level, where NGOs claim a comparative advantage over government, that social and economic decisions are increasingly made, and where civil loyalties therefore gravitate. NGO credibility in provision of 'community-based' services is frequently earned at the expense of the perceived legitimacy of central governments. It is ironic that the proliferation of ethnically-defined conflicts probably derives, in part at least, from the political success of NGOs in strengthening 'civil

Photo: A. Hollmann/UNHCR

society' at the communal level, compounded by their failure to meet rising aspirations in the economic sphere.

As states have divested themselves of their operational welfare role, many have emphasised their residual security functions, and have resorted to terror and violence to stay in power. Under these circumstances, armed insurgency may be seen as the only available means of political expression and economic advancement. Resource wars, often identified with ethnic loyalties, have created an explosion in political violence and human suffering. From 10 wars in 1959, there are now more than 50 being waged. From less than 10 million refugees in 1980, the world now has 23 million.

In response to this, a significant shift from development to emergency aid has occured. From less than $200 million in 1971, emergency aid spending by OECD countries had expanded to $2.6 billion. The UN Consolidated Appeal for Rwanda in 1994 alone raised more than $1 billion.

This is big business and the competition, between the humanitarian NGOs and between the human rights organisations, is intense. The designer flags, T-shirts, watches, flak jackets and other branded apparel of the new humanitarian workers jostling for television profile, testify to this.

Markets versus mandates

Markets are, in theory, regulated by consumer choice. In humanitarian emergencies, the 'consumers' are often destitute, and are excluded from planning and coordination meetings. 'Choice,' from the perspective of the intended beneficiary,

is academic. If refugees and other disaster victims are unable to exercise consumer sovereignty, market-driven humanitarianism is certainly responsive to meeting the needs of other categories of 'consumers,' such as major donors and army commanders. This can be illustrated by contrasting the operational approaches of mandate- and market-driven humanitarian organisations.

Unicité is a concept used by the ICRC in circumscribing their operational jurisdiction. It is used to define territory in which the ICRC is 'uniquely' able to operate. Thus where international NGOs gain access to conflict zones under the recent phenomenon of integrated UN/NGO negotiated access programmes (e.g.: Operation Lifeline Sudan, Operation Restore Hope in Somalia), the ICRC's principle of unicité would indicate their own withdrawal.

In the absence of the ICRC, it is more likely that breaches of the Geneva Conventions can be perpetrated with impunity, since NGOs which lack a legal status in international humanitarian law have no mandate, no leverage and no experience in protecting prisoners of war, of visiting military detainees and so on.

The very process of negotiating UN/NGO access to conflict zones also confers legitimacy upon warring parties and, coincidentally, facilitates the incorporation of relief aid into military strategies. Given the media profile that NGOs seek, it is obvious why aspiring insurgents prefer the international NGOs to the publicity-shy ICRC. Furthermore, in pursuit of televised humanitarian success, northern politicians are much less likely to finance the traditionally tight-lipped ICRC than the publicity-hungry new humanitarian contractors.

The market-led introduction of NGOs into the space formerly occupied solely by the ICRC undermines the chances of holding Geneva Convention signatories to account. In addition, 'negotiated access' has replaced the formula of relief determined by need with a political negotiation between two warring parties. Such interventions may well reinforce the capacity of parties to wage war and may also offer an incentive to starve captive civilian populations to bolster a negotiating position.

Sub-contractors or innovators?

Nobody who witnessed the cholera camps in Goma could doubt that the humanitarian NGOs represent a profound expression of human compassion. Nevertheless, there is surely a deep paradox in the rapid expansion of the humanitarian industry and the simultaneous decline in refugee welfare and protection standards.

Certainly the absence of an independent inspectorate of humanitarian intervention allows maverick organisations to exploit more easily the new market opportunities, and this diminishes all agencies. In this respect, the NGO Code of Conduct published recently by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is a worthy initiative of self-regulation.

However, in view of the widespread erosion of existing minimum standards, and commonplace defiance of international humanitarian law, there can be very little hope that the Code of Conduct will significantly alter matters on it own. Ironically, the concept of a 'culture of impunity' that is used to describe the political and moral economy of the Rwandan refugee camps could equally be employed to describe the modern humanitarian aid industry; donors, NGOs and all.

Nicholas Stockton
OXFAM UK & Ireland Relief Coordinator

Aid on the front line: working in conflict

ACTIONAID is an international NGO which funds, designs and manages long-term programmes of integrated rural and urban development. By long-term, a minimum of ten years in intended. As an operational agency, ACTIONAID prides itself on its ability to establish long-term relationships with communities with which it works. Its developmental approach strives towards the preserving and building of livelihoods.

In Africa, ACTIONAID works in ten countries, each of which is experiencing conflict at one level or another. We are therefore forced to ask ourselves serious questions about what we mean by long-term development in such an unstable political environment.

In both relief and development interventions, NGOs work in a context which is substantially defined by official aid policies. This article reflects on the ACTIONAID experience of working in conflict in Africa where such policies have had a major impact.

Conflict: permanent or cyclical?

Whereas the linking of relief and development is achievable in rapid-onset emergencies such as earthquakes and floods, and in slow-onset emergencies such as drought, this approach is more problematic in the case of conflict. We must therefore define the limits of the concept of conflict for it occurs at different levels and intensities, at some of which it may be possible to work developmentally and at others not.

It is suggested that many of the conflicts in Africa today may be seen as being of a permanent or cyclical nature. Rwanda and Burundi, for example, are countries where conflict has been present for 30 years. The potential for violence was there as a result of unresolved questions over the distribution of resources and of political power. The presence of potential or "dormant" conflict was embedded in the social fabric of both countries and was a significant force on the mediation of political, economic and social relations. Violent conflict erupted in the 1970s and 1980s, following which there was an uneasy post-conflict period which, with the passage of time, was transformed into a longer period of dormant conflict. Rwanda and Burundi represent particularly clear examples of dormant conflict but similar cases could be made for other African countries such as Kenya, Somalia and north-east Ghana.

The cyclical model of conflict which moves from the dormant phase to one of violence and then to the post-conflict period enables us to see at what point an operational NGO such as ACTIONAID is able to respond, and in what manner.

Before the escalation of the civil war in Somalia, for example, ACTIONAID worked on long-term development and community capacity-building programmes in the north-east and north-west of the country. As the fighting increased it created conditions which made development work impossible and the agency withdrew incrementally to a base in Mogadishu. Just before the fighting reached the capital, ACTIONAID and other agencies, including the UN, closed their offices and left the country.

ACTIONAID's experience elsewhere has been similar. During periods of violent conflict, activities have had to be suspended. This happened for a short while in Burundi in 1993 and in Sierra Leone earlier this year. With the cessation of violence ACTIONAID was able to re-establish its programmes in north-east Somalia (Somaliland) and in Burundi. In Sierra Leone a reduced programme is currently being attempted but, with insecure roads between Freetown and the programme area in the north, the amount of work which is possible is

A developmental approach is striven for whenever possible, even in relief work.

minimal. Thus, the nature of the intervention in the post-conflict phase is qualitatively different from the work undertaken before the conflict.

Rethinking development in conflict situations

Until relatively recently ACTIONAID, together with other development agencies, failed to appreciate the nature of "dormant" or potential conflict in many of the African countries in which it works. Poverty analysis included reference to the unequal distribution of world resources, international trade agreements which were unfavourable to developing countries, policies of international financial institutions, environmental degradation and so on.

Development interventions were designed with the aim of eradicating absolute poverty and included programmes which integrated health, sanitation, economic empowerment, adult literacy training and increased agricultural production. Participatory techniques were employed with the aim of assuring sustainability and ownership of the work by the communities themselves. Programme staff were sensitive to questions of ethnicity, cultural differentiation and tradition, and many programmes recognised that conflict was a possible threat to progress. Significantly, however, conflict analysis was not until very recently included in the overall analysis of poverty.

The increased incidence of conflict in Africa has led to a reassessment of this position. As stated earlier, ACTIONAID works in ten African countries, each of which is currently experiencing one of the three aspects of conflict mentioned above: potential or "dormant" conflict (for example, Kenya and Uganda), violent conflict (Burundi and Sierra Leone) or post-conflict fragility (Mozambique and Somaliland).

Each type of conflict situation has demanded a different style of response.

In conflicts and emergencies which demand immediate and distributive responses, ACTIONAID so far has limited experience. Between 1987 and 1992 the agency delivered relief in parts of Zambezia Province in war-torn Mozambique and since then, with an assured peace in that country, it has transformed the programme into one of reconstruction and development. Since July 1994 ACTIONAID has worked in the Rwandan refugee camps in Kivu Province, Zaire, under conditions which made the ideal of participation problematic. Now that the "emergency" is under control, when the agreement with UNHCR shortly comes to an end the agency will withdraw and any follow-up work will be through local institutions in Rwanda itself.

Much of the literature concerning the so-called relief and development continuum focuses on the linear model of development as presented by modernisation theory. One writer refers to the "myth of modernity", which states that shared progress is the normal and long-term direction of all social change. Systemic crisis and political fragmentation, it is pointed out, is the antithesis of the developmental world view.

In modernisation theory, communities are regarded as "backward" and weighed down by obsolete cultural values and practices. A transformation is therefore sought towards "modernisation" by which a given society becomes dynamic, innovative and, through a process of economic growth, is enabled to "take off".

Modernisation theory is contrasted with dependency theory which focuses on the liberation of the poor through a process of awareness-raising and this leads to the building of collective action and empowerment.

In the middle ground between these two theoretical positions is community development which, while recognising the importance of

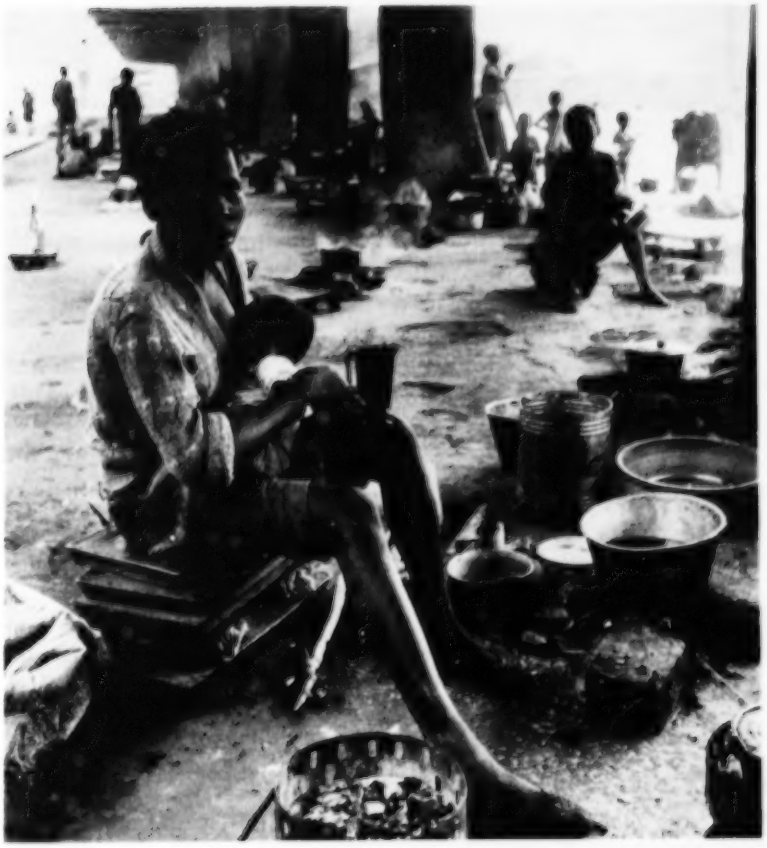

Photo: C. Sattlberger/UNHCR

certain aspects of modernisation, views people and their practices not as constraints to development but rather as being in need of "special attention", in the words of one writer, to enable them to move towards self-sustaining development.

At ACTIONAID the modernisation approach was abandoned a number of years ago in favour of a participatory approach to community development and that approach strives towards the preservation and building of livelihoods. It is important to note here that this objective applies not only in times of peace but also at times of conflict-related emergencies. In other words, a developmental approach, in ACTIONAID's definition of the term, is striven for whenever possible, even in relief work.

ACTIONAID's experience of working in conflict situations has revealed five learning themes:

First is the issue of democracy. In several of the African countries where we have worked in conflict, the insistence of major aid donors on multi-party politics has been directly linked to outbreaks of conflict (for example, Burundi and Kenya). The question of governance, particularly at the local level, therefore has to be addressed.

Second is the emergence, or re-emergence, or traditional systems of authority when central state structures weaken or fall away. This was particularly the case in Burundi and Somaliland and was an issue in Ghana. An understanding of these authority systems is therefore crucial to development initiatives in conflict situations.

Third is the incorporation of ethnicity into conflict in such a way that complex political issues can be wrongly accounted for by reference to ethnic conflict. This was the case in Burundi, Kenya and Ghana.

Fourth is the overriding need for NGOs which are external to the conflict to be neutral and to be seen as being neutral. This issue of neutrality is of great importance, for NGOs can often play the role of a neutral party to a degree that states cannot.

Fifth is the importance which is attached to information gathering, analysis and learning. National and international policy and advocacy work by engaged NGOs and based on their direct experience, can have as great an impact on the eventual resolution of a conflict as a material distributive response.

Robert Dodd, ACTIONAID

Conflicts, contract culture and codes of conduct

Disaster response today is a growth industry. We assist more people, in far more complex and often more dangerous situations, than ever before. In common with the NGO community and the UN agencies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is being expected to deal with the fall-out from rapid social and economic change, whether it be in the Russian Federation or Rwanda.

Organisations which traditionally saw their role as filling in gaps, providing innovative examples and easing the suffering of individuals now find their resources committed to long term assistance programmes, sometimes for millions of people. Rapid political and economic change, and growing poverty mean more wars – up to 56 mostly internal wars ongoing compared with 34 in 1970, and 95 percent of the victims are civilians. There are more people on the move – at least 17 million refugees, 26 million internally displaced persons, 100 million economic migrants. There has been a huge leap in the emergency work-load. Without even including war victims, 250 to 300 million people a year are affected by disasters, and that figure is growing by around 10 million a year.

Funding for international humanitarian response is higher than it has ever been, but this growth is at a cost. In 1993, donor countries invested more than $3,200 million in disaster relief. Estimates for 1994 show an even higher figure. This is more than 10 times the figure a decade before and that does not include the enormous value of food aid. At a time when official ODA is faltering, the proportion of it going on disasters is climbing fast and has already reached seven percent.

This rapid increase in load has been accompanied by an equally rapid increase in the number of organisations offering assistance. The international aid business is one of the most un-regulated markets in the world, with few internationally agreed standards. And yet it is a market which literally deals in life and death issues for millions of people, and spends thousands of millions of dollars of other people's money.

Can this unregulated free-for-all continue for ever? If humanitarian assistance is to retain anything of its roots in caring and compassion for mankind then surely it has to reassert and abide by its value set.

Contract culture

This free-for-all in humanitarian assistance has also led to what some have termed the contract culture. NGOs and other independent humanitarian bodies are increasingly being contracted by donor institutions, UN agencies and local government bodies to carry out relief work and long term welfare work. Advocates of this approach cite the value of competitive bidding for contracts to sort out the efficient from the inefficient, and the improved reporting that comes with a legal obligation to account for funds spent. But there are also major drawbacks.

It is true that the marketplace serves the consumer, but in this marketplace who is the consumer? In reality the people who buy our product, who consume it, are not the programme beneficiaries, but the funding bodies. Agencies which best serve the criteria of funders will thrive in this marketplace, but what about agencies who best serve the interests of the beneficiaries, are they one and the same?

The contract culture also forces us to face some very basic questions about why we do this work we call humanitarianism. In the contract culture, agencies tend to be judged by that which can be measured. In relief work, that usually means measuring the process, not the impact of relief. If efficiency is to be judged by the cost effective delivery of food, the good

Photo: L. Stoop/ICRC

management of a hospital or the rational planning of a refugee camp, where is the added value of doing this through humanitarian agencies? Why not contract commercial companies to do the work?

Valuing values

Surely the answer lies in the way humanitarian agencies dispatch their duties. We need to be as efficient and effective as a commercial venture, but we have to go one step further and demonstrate through our work that basic value set which should be the hallmark of humanitarianism. Essentially it is about respect for human dignity, understanding that relief is addressed to the whole person, not just their physical needs. It is about taking the time to work with people to build for the future, not just provide for today.

The Federation believes that, in order to provide effective assistance, we need to focus on a three point agenda.

One: We must clearly and unambiguously state, and put into practice, our values and operational principles.

Two: We must state and put into practice the professional and technical standards to which we are committed.

Three: We must assertively lobby governments to respect humanitarian norms and rules, without which we cannot deliver assistance and protection.

Aid agencies need to reassert their basic values: neutrality, impartiality and independence are now vital prerequisites for effective assistance. In situations where violence predominates, humanitarian agencies have a duty to ensure that their practice allows them to deliver assistance to those who need it most, where they need it most and when they need it most.

Over the next decade or so, many NGOs which have yet to confront the neutrality issue will face hard questioning of their value sets. Today, many NGOs are essentially justice-driven, coming from a development background. Indeed, it is difficult to see how they could be otherwise if they truly want to be involved in community development, human rights, and issues of social and economic equity. But, if they apply that philosophy to their work in conflicts, they risk being labelled as part of the dispute and thus as legitimate targets.

It is not a matter of any one approach being right and others wrong. It is a question of understanding the limitations and opportunities of each approach. Many new NGOs arrive in disasters with neither the experience nor the mandates to deal with these critical issues and have a steep learning curve to climb if they are going to reach an acceptable level of competence.

High standards in practice

High professional standards in international assistance are essential. What few people outside the disaster-response system realise is that these agencies, old and new, from multi-million dollar outfits to one-man shows, have no accepted body of professional standards to guide their work. There is still an assumption in many countries that disaster relief is essentially "charitable" work and therefore anything that is done in the name of helping disaster victims is acceptable. However, this is far from the truth.

Agencies, whether experienced or newly-created, can make mistakes, be misguided and sometimes deliberately misuse the trust that is placed in them. The immediacy of disaster relief can often lead NGOs unwittingly to put pressure on themselves, pressure which leads to short-sighted and inappropriate work: programmes which rely on foreign imports or expertise, projects which pay little attention to local custom and culture and activities which accept the easy and high media-profile tasks of relief but leave for others the less appealing and more difficult ones of disaster preparedness and long-term rehabilitation.

All NGOs, big and small, are susceptible to these internal and external pressures. As NGOs are asked to do more and the incidence of complex disasters involving natural, economic and often military factors increases, the need for some sort of basic professional code becomes more and more imperative.

It is for all these reasons that six of the world's oldest and largest networks of NGOs came together in 1994 with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to draw up a professional Code of Conduct to set, for the first time, universal basic standards to govern the way they should work in disaster assistance. The Code of Conduct, like most professional codes, is a voluntary one. It is applicable to any NGO, be it national or international, small or large. It lays down ten points of principle which all NGOs should adhere to in their disaster-response work and goes on to describe the relationships that agencies working in disasters should seek with donor governments, host governments and the UN system.

Respect for rules is essential

To complete the picture, governments must respect the humanitarian norms and rules that agencies like the Federation need to

Principles of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

1 The humanitarian imperative comes first.
2 Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3 Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4 We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
5 We shall respect culture and custom.
6 We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
7 Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8 Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9 We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10 In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

The full text of the Code of Conduct is available both as a stand alone document (in English, French, Spanish and Arabic) or as a section of the World Disasters Report 1994 (in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, with a commentary) from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, PO Box 372, 1211 Geneva 19. Fax: +41 22 7330395

work to in order to do their jobs. They must accept that humanitarian action is no substitute for diplomatic and political action to address the underlying causes of today's humanitarian crises. The vogue of the "integrated approach" to assistance which links humanitarian assistance to political and military intervention may make theoretical sense in the safety of an agency's headquarters, but by linking humanitarian assistance with military force, albeit in the form of peace-keeping operations, or with political objectives, as is the case with UN-imposed sanctions, humanitarian assistance is being drawn into the conflict. Agencies, rightly or wrongly, are perceived as taking sides and their ability to alleviate suffering is severely hampered. Humanitarian assistance is no longer a side issue in today's crises. It is a central issue, hotly fought over, heavily funded and often under attack.

Faced with this stark reality of a world with more disasters, the Federation believes that it is time to call for an urgent re-examination of how humanitarian agencies operate, their relationship with government and intergovernmental agencies and as importantly, their relationship with those they seek to serve: the survivors of disaster and crisis.

Peter Walker
Director, Disaster and Refugee Policy
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Rwanda: the aid impasse

Rwanda is a "humanitarian laboratory", but then again aren't most emergencies? Each one seems to offer a new set of lessons, offers up ways that responses could be improved, gives us insights into ways to strengthen our means to assist the afflicted. The problem is that all too often we discover these lessons after the event, and then we apply these very same lessons to subsequent emergencies that have little relevance to those of the past.

Rwanda is a case in point. The victims of the Rwanda emergency have been unusual: the society, itself, and governance. Blankets, nutritional feeding, plastic sheeting and all the other trappings of emergency relief were of course needed and provided for a wide range of vulnerable groups, internally displaced persons and refugees.

But the victims in the particular context of Rwanda required something more, a rapid though sensitive approach to societal stabilisation. This sort of unconventional emergency relief would require the international community to review its very conception of "survival needs". It would confront the international community with politically-sensitive decisions about the criteria of "relief", and in many instances would challenge the procedures by which donors pledge and commit funds.

The inevitable question that must be asked is whether the international community recognised and responded to the challenge of this new dimension of affliction? To what extent did we understand the necessity and dynamics of social stabilisation; and to what extent did we effectively respond?

As a new Government assumed power in mid-July 1994, the humanitarian situation was complex and prospects for ready solutions grim. An estimated two million Rwandese had fled the country to take up refuge in neighbouring states. Approximately 900,000 people were displaced within Rwanda, and the government machinery that had in the past provided a modicum of social services was in complete disarray.

Yet, the real victims were more difficult to see and to assess. Between April and July 1994, a society had imploded. A genocide had occurred that led to the deaths of between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people. The atrocities visited upon men, women and children by men, women and children must rank high in history's annals of human cruelty. Trauma, desperation, despair, hatred and anxiety in one way or another pervaded everything. A society was reeling from a potentially fatal blow. It was the victim.

As one victim struggled for survival, so did another: governance. In all too many instances, those with administrative experience had either been killed or had fled to escape retribution. Ministries as well as local Government offices had been stripped bare; files, like the buildings in which they were housed, were ransacked and substantially destroyed.

Perhaps it takes a long time to understand the impact of a genocide, to understand its totally debilitating and traumatic consequences. Too often, one lapses into well-intentioned proposals for "reconciliation", or, even worse hints that maybe "it is time to pull oneself together and get on with the job". Or maybe one doesn't even really notice, and assumes that somewhere between plastic sheeting, jerry cans, blankets and conventional development programmes, there is a suitable solution.

Forget the continuum and build barracks

For almost seven years if not more, the humanitarian and development communities have been discussing and debating the virtues of what has been called "the continuum", or, the important transition from relief to development.

The response mechanisms of donors were too cumbersome to respond to the needs of an effective stabilisation programme.

There have been variants on this theme, changes in its conception, even rejection in some quarters of the entire principle. Yet, what is not addressed by the "continuum" or, in many respects, the separate approaches to relief or development is what is required in a situation where the victims are the society itself and the capacity to govern.

More and more it is apparent that stabilisation is the territory into which the international community must venture. In the case of Rwanda, stabilisation activities require the commitment of the international community to underpin the structures of state and nation-hood. Blankets, nutrition feeding, boreholes will always be needed; but more than that is a clear assessment of what will be required to make the society function – not in terms of longer-term development, but today, tomorrow.

To the extent that the functioning of the state is assisted through international aid, it is clearly seen in developmental terms. Capacitating ministries through extensive personnel training, devising strategies for budgeting processes, creating new structures, departments and the like are just a few examples of the way states in the past have been helped through development.

Yet a society in crisis requires more immediate support. It needs to have those instruments that will ensure social stability quickly reestablished. Without such support, the likelihood is that chaos and insecurity will intensify and social confidence will decline further.

In Rwanda, stabilisation programmes were and continue to be essential. What does this mean exactly? A great deal of deliberation had been devoted to restoration of the "justice system" in Rwanda. The need to provide means that would offer systematic recourse to accusations of genocide was accepted as a principle. And yet, the necessary commitments and actions essential to restore a semblance of justice have been all too long in coming.

Stabilisation programmes also concern more contentious issues such as providing for a functioning police system, adequate prison facilities as well as measures that would assist in supporting discipline within the army.

Political reluctance on the part of the international community has prevented to a significant extent the release of resources needed to bolster these essential instruments of social stabilisation. Military barracks, for example, would be a step towards ensuring greater discipline, would free houses now occupied by the military and would create a better environment between the military and civilian populations.

At the same time, stabilisation programmes heed to incorporate targeted assistance to restore damaged infrastructure. Water, electric power, restoration of the capacities of government institutions – not only in the capital but also in the provinces – are all essential for ensuring stabilisation.

Yet, stabilisation programmes, unlike many aspects of development, are dependent upon a rapid response. More like emergency assistance, stabilisation aid demands quick inputs not only to ensure that basic services of the society are maintained, but also to stem further deterioration of such services.

And, here is where one arrives at the aid impasse.

The aid impasse

There can be little doubt that the humanitarian response to refugees from Rwanda as well as to internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups was provided in a timely and appropriate way. Yet, in addressing the plight of Rwanda's society and governance, the donor community seemed to be at an impasse. The requirements did not seem to fit into conventional categories of development, nor did they fit normal assumptions about relief.

The Rwanda Emergency

Normalisation Programme (RENP) is a case in point. Introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in September 1994, the RENP was as an important initiative designed to provide "emergency relief" to the structure and institutions of the battered Rwandan society. Yet the UN system and, more importantly in this case, the donor community seemed to be at a loss as to where the initiative should fit in the context of standard response mechanisms.

While discussions ensued in many circles about the legitimacy of the new Rwandan Government, several key donors were equally perplexed on a more "technical level" about mechanisms for providing resources suitable for stabilisation programmes.

Three problems seemed to present themselves in responding to stabilisation needs. The first was the type of needs themselves. Prisons, police forces, military facilities – even salaries for soldiers – were all essential, but items nevertheless regarded as too politically sensitive.

Secondly, in instances where needs were considered to be less politically sensitive, such as the justice system, there was an incomplete understanding about what really was required. Was one talking about court houses or legal texts, judges and magistrates, defense attorneys and prosecutors, or more traditional adjudication systems?

In part the uncertainty stemmed from the Government's own lack of a clear appreciation of what might be required. Yet the Government's own uncertainties masked something far more fundamental that was not fully appreciated by outsiders. The Government needed, wanted to "put something in place". It needed action, a clear demonstration in the country that there was a system, no matter how basic, to which accusers and accused had recourse.

The urgency of getting some kind of basic system going in the home communes was lost in a welter of discussion about concepts and broad-based projects. However, what was clearly needed were far more basic means, such as funding for local officials' salaries and simple office equipment. Needs of the justice system were seen from the wrong dimension. Speed and simplicity were far more important that the longer-term reconstruction of the justice system as a whole.

Thirdly, what became painfully clear was that the response mechanisms of even well-intentioned donors were too slow and cumbersome to respond to the needs of an effective stabilisation programme. This serious problem was epitomised in a conversation with a representative of a major donor country who, after reviewing his government's extensive plans to assist with the justice system, was asked when the funds for the project would actually be received. "Yes," the representative replied rather morosely, "that's a problem. The money seems to be tied up in all sorts of bureaucracy in the capital ...".

An insurmountable impasse?

Of the many lessons that come out of the Rwanda experience, one of the most essential is of the nature of needs for a traumatised society. To a very significant extent, our assumptions about relief and development must be revisited. Stabilisation programmes demand a different dynamic and a willingness to address the fundamental requirements of a society in crisis.

This lesson serves as an additional reason to review the response mechanisms of donors and agencies alike. Unless there are changes in the speed, flexibility and categories of international assistance, the impasse will continue to impair our ability to address the needs of shattered societies and their ability to govern.

Randolph Kent
UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Rwanda

Afghanistan: conflict beyond the State

In the absence of a strong state structure, an alternative mechanism is required to deliver humanitarian assistance during or after a conflict. There are three broad options for the UN Secretary-General in such circumstances. He can invite the UNDP Resident Representative to act as Resident Coordinator to coordinate the UN agencies; he can appoint one of the UN agencies involved in the assistance activities as the "lead agency"; or he can appoint a Coordinator.

In the case of Afghanistan the Secretary-General chose the third option and in April 1988 named Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, a prominent international personality, as Coordinator. The Coordinator established the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA). In January 1993 UNOCA became UNOCHA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, under the overall responsibility of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

The Coordinator's task was to prepare a massive international response to the needs of five million refugees due to return home and to begin rebuilding a devastated

Photo: J. Fakhouri/UNHCR

The impartiality of the programme made a coordinated effort possible, despite the absence of a strong state structure.

country. UNOCA was given a mandate "to coordinate the activities of the United Nations system on behalf of the Secretary-General; monitor operations in the context of an integrated United Nations system on behalf of the Secretary-General; monitor operations in the context of an integrated United Nations programme of humanitarian and economic assistance while implementation remained the responsibility of the agency concerned; discuss and negotiate with all concerned parties, when necessary, as the spokesman for the United Nations system; and direct and organize special tasks not within the mandate of any given United Nations Agency".

After six years this initiative can be judged a success, although some colleagues in the UN system felt that the coordination of UN agency activities in Afghanistan could better have been assigned to two lead agencies – UNHCR for the return of refugees, and UNDP for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country. It enabled substantial funds to be raised, some from unprecedented sources while providing a framework within which the UN agencies were able to operate outside the traditional political environment. It also offered a vehicle for fulfilling tasks for which the agencies were not prepared.

Forming an encircling consensus

At a pledging conference in October 1988 and immediately after, some $900 million was pledged, the biggest part of it an in-kind pledge from the Soviet Union. Many contributions were channeled through the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund, administered by UNOCA, to ensure a balanced allocation of emergency funds to activities of UN agencies and NGOs based on geographical and sectoral priorities. UNOCA also coordinated the delivery of the Soviet pledge.

There were two concepts which proved to be important to the success of the whole humanitarian operation in Afghanistan, where the government in Kabul controlled only a limited part of the country: "humanitarian consensus" and its counterpart "humanitarian encirclement".

The concept of "humanitarian consensus" was used to describe the agreement among all parties and groups in Afghanistan that humanitarian aid should be allowed to reach those in need throughout the country. The Government in Kabul agreed that international UN staff would be allowed free movement in all parts of the country, and that they could cross from neighbouring countries directly into parts of Afghanistan outside government control. This approach allowed UNOCA to persuade Mujahideen party leaders and commanders that humanitarian aid should be permitted to transit their areas, and that they should even accept aid which came from the Soviet Union.

"Humanitarian encirclement" was the idea that humanitarian aid should be delivered to land-locked Afghanistan through all its neighboring countries. UNOCA delivered assistance from the beginning through Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Iran. Salam Express trains ran from Finland through the Soviet Union to Afghanistan.

An even wider role for coordination

Until recently there was no commercial air link with Afghanistan. Another important part of UNOCHA's coordination role, therefore, is the operation of two small aircraft between Islamabad and some twenty locations in Afghanistan. Although running an air operation in circumstances of continued insecurity is always difficult, it has enabled UNOCA/UNOCHA to keep its finger on the coordination of the field operation.

When UNOCA was set up in Afghanistan in 1988, the available implementing partners for the UN were Government departments in the cities and international NGOs in the rural areas. As there were few opportunities for Afghans to work in senior management positions in the rural areas, UNOCA encouraged the development of Afghan NGOs, which now implement parts of the rural rehabilitation programme, the agriculture programmes of FAO, and the food-for-work programmes of WFP.

The Coordinator acquired additional influence over the direction of the programme thanks to the decision that UNOCA should deal directly with the question of land mines in Afghanistan, since it fell outside the mandate of any of the UN agencies.

It was soon established that large numbers of Afghans needed to be trained to carry out basic mine clearance. At the same time refugee families living in camps needed to be made aware of the dangers which mines would pose on the journey home and upon their return. In 1990 the first mine clearance work in Afghanistan began under a project agreement between UNOCA and an Afghan NGO.

Now UNOCHA manages a programme in which more than 3,000 Afghans are employed by six Afghan NGOs and one international NGO to carry out mine clearance in Afghanistan, at an overall cost of around $20 million per year. More than 50 square kilometers of land have been cleared, representing half the mined areas identified for priority clearance. The target is to complete the remaining 50 percent by the end of 1997. There is no doubt that this operational task added credibility to UNOCHA's coordinating role.

The right person for the job

The establishment of UNOCA and all that flowed from that decision had a significant impact on events in Afghanistan and particularly on the return movement of refugees.

In particular, putting a man with the profile and experience of Prince Sadruddin as the Coordinator in charge of a programme for a single country sent a message of total commitment by the UN to Afghanistan. The impartiality of the programme and the agreement that the UN could work in all areas of the country without prior approval by the Government made a coordinated effort possible, despite the absence of a strong state structure.

A lead agency effort would have been directed by career UN officials, who could not have obtained the same attention from donors and other UN agencies, or had so much impact on Afghan and NGO perceptions of the UN's aid efforts. Also, it would have been more difficult to avoid central government involvement in decisions affecting areas not under its control.

Martin Barber,
UN Coordinator for the Emergency Humanitarian Programme for Afghanistan

Stretching the boundaries of relief in the NIS

The world map of humanitarian crises has been changed profoundly by the wave of conflict which has followed in the wake of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Massive population movements have occurred as a result, starting in the early 1990s, both in Central Asia and in the Caucasus.

Tajikistan, in Central Asia, and the trans-Caucasian republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were all affected by civil war soon after their independence. The mobilisation of resources for the various war efforts in these countries, and the inability of the respective governments to maintain social safety nets in environments of general instability, have exacerbated the difficulties of transition to market economies felt by all new republics in the region.

Today, these countries are emerging from war. They are the most vulnerable of the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union (NIS). In Tajikistan, most of the population who fled the fighting have been able to return to their home villages, but the food supply situation is critical and the overall economy extremely fragile. In the trans-Caucasian republics, fighting has been interrupted by the signing of cease-fires in 1994. However, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees have been unable so far to return home due to the lack of durable political solutions.

Addressing the humanitarian needs in these countries has figured among the international community's greatest challenges in the past few years. Relief assistance was initiated in Tajikistan and the trans-Caucasian republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in 1991. Humanitarian activities, mainly in the sectors of shelter, food, nutrition and health, have since been carried out to respond to the most essential needs of internally displaced persons, refugees and other vulnerable groups. Humanitarian aid has also been mobilised for persons displaced as a result of the emergency situation in Chechnya, Russian Federation, which broke out at the end of 1994.

Whereas a number of newly independent states of the former Soviet Union have been receiving long-term assistance since the early 1990s to help them in the transition to a market economy, Tajikistan and the three trans-Caucasian republics have been considered too unstable for investments and assistance of that nature. Very little aid has been provided except to cater for urgent requirements, through programmes by UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and NGOs. The bulk of bilateral aid has been in the form of food. Only in the past year, following the signing of cease-fires in the Caucasus, between Armenia and Azerbaijan and between Georgia and Abkhazia, has the international community started to plan for substantial development and/or economic assistance for these republics.

The horns of a dilemma

Because of conflict, much time has been lost, and it will take years before the benefits of recent international economic aid initiatives are felt by the populations overall. Furthermore, in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the cessation of hostilities has not yet been followed by durable conflict resolution despite repeated regional and UN initiatives. The steps taken so far to provide long-term assistance, therefore, are still cautious.

At the same time, donors are also growing impatient at the political stalemates, and this impatience is having serious consequences on the levels of funding available for humanitarian assistance in Armenia, Azerbaijan and – especially – Georgia. Repeated inter-agency appeals for humanitarian activities in these countries have been initiated by DHA. But little funding has materialised so far for the proposed

Photo: R. Colville/UNHCR

programmes. For Georgia, where the repatriation process is at a stalemate and the living conditions of the population have considerably worsened during the past year, donors have so far been willing to fund only 10 percent of the humanitarian activities proposed under the most recent consolidated appeal, issued in late March 1995.

This poor level of sponsorship for humanitarian programmes is seen by many aid agencies as paradoxical in view of the high level of interest of the international community in the resolution of conflicts in the NIS. Humanitarian assistance represents a lifeline support to populations affected by conflict. Failure to respond to the basic needs of these populations will augment the risk of instability, as the lack of humanitarian support is likely to cause escalating desperation among displaced persons, refugees and other most vulnerable groups.

Admittedly, a dilemma is confronting both the humanitarian community and donors. The scars of conflict are profound, and the lack of progress towards durable peace in the region is perpetuating humanitarian needs. At the same time, the countries in question have an enormous potential for economic progress, if only the human, natural and infrastructural resources were fully utilised. Hundreds of thousands among these countries' populations are now sitting idle in temporary camps, waiting to resume normal life. Others have been able to avoid displacement, but they have no jobs as little land is cultivated and most factories are closed due to lack of revenue to buy fuel and other essentials for agricultural and industrial production.

One of the most unacceptable consequences of this situation is the break-down of education systems,

Funding shortages remain the major obstacle to the continuation of emergency assistance and the start-up of rehabilitation activities.

which were among the most valuable assets of these countries in the past. A whole generation of children has had no regular access to school for years. The risk is substantial that gaps in education will exacerbate the lack of understanding among populations, so reducing the long-term prospects for progress and increasing the potential for chronic instability.

Humanitarian agencies agree that relief activities cannot be continued indefinitely, because of the dependence it creates among the beneficiaries. However, for the reasons evoked above, an abrupt halt to humanitarian assistance is no solution. Since mid-1994, the humanitarian community has been engaged in an ongoing consultative process, led by DHA, to determine the future of humanitarian assistance in the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan and the trans-Caucasian republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The emergency situation in Chechnya is also under review with the objective of determining the extent of humanitarian involvement in the region.

These consultations, initiated in September 1994, involved all humanitarian partners on the ground, including UN agencies and programmes, IOM, national and international NGOs, as well as the ICRC and the Federation. In this process, DHA has encouraged the involvement of donors as well as national counterparts – both governmental and non-governmental – in order to ensure that inputs be provided by all interested parties.

A consensus emerged that relief activities should be phased down as soon as possible, and emphasis should be placed progressively on programmes aimed at ensuring a smooth transition towards rehabilitation and long-term development, which would also facilitate an eventual phase-out of relief activities in these countries. At the same time, it was recognised that vulnerable categories were in fact multiplying and growing in size, as a direct result of economic hardship. The inability of displaced persons to return home also called for continued assistance to these categories. However, because of the low level of funding for humanitarian activities in Tajikistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the future does not augur well for a continuation of programmes of this nature.

In Tajikistan, despite the continuing hardship faced by the populations because of the country's economic difficulties, emergency humanitarian assistance can no longer be justified in view of the return of more than 90 percent of refugees and internally displaced persons to their home areas. Negotiations are ongoing within the UN system, as well as between the UN and other organisations, to encourage continued support to Tajikistan in the form of rehabilitation and longer-term assistance, as well as protection and human-rights monitoring of affected populations.

In the Russian Federation, assistance to displaced persons resulting from the emergency in Chechnya is unlikely to be extended beyond 1995. The continuation and completion of current programmes will also be dependent upon the availability of sufficient funding.

In the trans-Caucasian republics of Azerbaijan and Georgia, while donors are reluctant to finance costly relief operations, there is perhaps also confusion among the donor community as to who should carry out transitional activities among aid agencies and a doubt as to whether such programmes are viable in the current unstable environment. Funding shortages, therefore, remain the major obstacle both to the continuation of emergency assistance and the start-up of rehabilitation activities. Refugee-related programmes in Armenia are less dependent upon emergency support than in these two countries; however, other humanitarian activities carried out in Armenia face funding problems similar to those experienced for programmes

in Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The dilemma affecting the humanitarian community is, therefore, multi-faceted. Should populations affected by the political stalemate be left to their own devices simply because the poverty that strikes them no longer conforms to donor definitions of an emergency? How can we phase down and eventually out of relief activities in countries where the capacity of governments to provide for the needs of vulnerable populations is practically nil?

How can the humanitarian community promote a "smooth" transition from emergency-related activities to rehabilitation and longer-term development when donors do not provide it with the means to develop transitional activities? Moreover, is there any hope that emergency needs will cease to exist when the lack of overall stability, and inadequate donor interest, does not incite development-oriented organisations to continue assistance efforts?

Wherever United Nations agencies plan to phase down their humanitarian activities, it is envisaged that a monitoring capacity will remain on the ground, should emergency needs resurface on a large scale. In parallel, other initiatives are being taken to improve the international community's ability, as well as the national governments' capacities, to face the potential emergency needs which could result from either natural or man-made disasters, or from a recurrence of fighting. Questions related to population displacement and migration in the newly independent republics, as well as in neighbouring states, is receiving considerable attention by the United Nations and other international organisations. Human rights monitoring and the necessity for the new republics of the former Soviet Union to develop adequate constitutional and legislative frameworks are also issues which are being given greater emphasis by the international community.

Before stability can prevail in conflict-stricken republics of the former Soviet Union, these and other issues need to be thoroughly addressed, by the international community and, more importantly, by the respective governments.

Most of these concerns are beyond the scope of traditional humanitarianism. The countries in question need assistance from organisations which have the capacity and mandates to propose long-term solutions and which can help these governments address macro-economic issues and achieve relative overall stability. However, in the period of transition, until measures at these levels have an effect on everyday life, the humanitarian community needs adequate support to ensure continued assistance to the most vulnerable in these new zones of poverty and violence.

Katarina Toll,
Humanitarian Affairs Officer,
DHA Complex Emergency Support Unit

Sudan: in pursuit of humanitarian neutrality

When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.

Traditional African proverb

In the increasingly politicised environments of today's complex emergencies, serious questions are being asked of many of the principles upon which humanitarian programmes are based – none more so than those of neutrality and impartiality. Such questions and criticisms are especially strongly voiced in situations such as Rwanda and Bosnia where, in the absence of any effective political action, the provision of humanitarian assistance is seen by many as a substitute for a just solution.

This however leads to questioning of the neutrality of aid. Is not the very act of seeking to provide assistance neutrally and impartially to both victims and aggressors a form of condoning that very aggression which created the humanitarian crisis?

Neutrality defined by the Oxford English Dictionary is "not assisting either of two belligerent states or standing aloof". The ICRC (the traditional guardian of the concept) goes further in its operational definition, arguing that "in order to enjoy the confidence of all", it can only work if allowed to do so on all sides of the conflict.

Impartiality is defined as not discriminating as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Impartiality demands that relief of suffering be guided solely by the needs of the individuals concerned. If respected, impartiality should lead to adherence to the principle of proportionality which argues for the provision of humanitarian assistance to be proportional to the degree of suffering.

The sovereign is still supreme

Despite the UN Secretary-General's assertion in 1992 that a "redefinition of sovereignty will be one of the major intellectual exercises of our time", there is a continued reluctance by the UN and its member states to breach sovereignty on humanitarian grounds. This means that any humanitarian assistance programme based on negotiated access is vulnerable to constraints on its activities imposed by the Government.

Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) is such a programme. All assistance provided has to have the approval of the warring parties (the Government and the two main rebel movements). However the Government, as the sovereign entity, does have the last word and is able to deny access to certain locations.

While the overall number of locations reached and therefore populations served has dramatically increased through negotiated agreements in the last three years, access to key locations where there is evidence of serious suffering is consistently denied. The people of Pariang, isolated by the war and cut from basic health services for many years, continue to suffer from extraordinarily high levels of mortality from kala-hazar.

While there may be few alternatives to accepting this situation, OLS has often been strongly criticised by other parties to the conflict and by international NGOs for allowing sovereignty to prevent it from meeting genuine needs. Thus, they argue, the impartiality and neutrality of the operation is severely compromised.

While the issue of sovereignty and humanitarian action has been high on the political and humanitarian agenda for some years, another much less discussed factor needs to be recognised. This is the nature of modern warfare in countries such as Sudan where, increasingly, the war permeates all levels of society blurring distinctions between civilian and military.

The military are not a distinct group, separated from the civilian

Neutrality and impartiality in the Sudan

Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) is a programme of humanitarian assistance established in 1989 to meet the needs of the victims of the war in southern Sudan. It is based on a negotiated access agreement with all parties to the conflict (Government of Sudan and the two main rebel movements) and provides assistance to both government and rebel-controlled areas. It currently delivers assistance from within the Sudan as well as through cross-border operations from Kenya. Basic ground rules being drawn up to protect humanitarian action in rebel-held areas include a statement of commitment to neutrality and impartiality: "The guiding principle of OLS is that of humanitarian neutrality – an independent status for humanitarian work beyond political or military considerations. In other words:

i. Humanitarian aid must be given according to considerations of human need alone. Its granting, or its acceptance, must not be made dependent on political factors or upon race, religion, ethnicity or nationality. It must not seek to advance any political agenda. Where humanitarian assistance is inadequate to meet the needs of all, priority must be given to the most vulnerable.

ii The passage of humanitarian assistance to populations in need should not be denied even if this requires that aid passes through an area controlled by one party in order to reach the needy in another area, provided that such passage is not used for military advantage.

iii Relief assistance is provided solely on the basis of need; those providing assistance do not affiliate themselves to any side in the ongoing conflict.

iv The only constraints on responding to humanitarian need should be those of resources and practicality.

v All humanitarian assistance provided is for the use of identified civilian beneficiaries. Priority must at all times be given to women and children and other vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled and displaced people.

vi Local authorities must ensure that aid is distributed fairly to civilian beneficiaries. Diversion of aid from intended beneficiaries is regarded as a breach of humanitarian principles."

Practical applications

Among the practical applications that flow or should flow from such commitments are:

- An acceptance that access to civilians in need and therefore deliveries of humanitarian assistance are to be based on UN/OLS assessments of need, not on assessments by any party to the conflict.
- An acceptance that the cross-border operation serves populations in areas that are controlled by all parties to the conflict.
- OLS and its constituent agencies hold local authorities accountable for effective distributions, and if necessary withhold deliveries until points of interference or contention are resolved.

population, but are fathers, brothers, sons, frequently returning to their homes. Clearly, in such circumstances, women and children who have received aid from OLS agencies are not going to refuse to feed their own family members. Thus, even while the ground rules seek to ensure that the military do not benefit from humanitarian assistance, practice is clearly otherwise.

What price neutrality?

Analysts of humanitarian crises and complex emergencies are increasingly recognising that humanitarian assistance must tackle the root causes of suffering, such as conflict

itself (see for example the Providence Principles, the Mohonk Criteria) through the promotion of peace and reconciliation. Southern Sudanese themselves have often called upon OLS to take such a role upon itself. Yet to do so, even in the pursuit of alleviating suffering and thereby meeting a humanitarian need, would be perceived as direct interference in the conflict and would therefore be a contravention of neutrality. OLS maintains its neutrality – but at what price?

The benefits of negotiated access agreements are not to be underestimated. Such negotiations provide a forum for parties to the conflict to open a dialogue, and an opportunity to move beyond the immediate humanitarian issues. Thus the principles and practices of OLS were reaffirmed by the first formal meeting of the Intergovernmental Group on Drought and Development (IGADD), established to help facilitate peace and a resolution of the conflict.

Frequent meetings of the parties to the conflict help to reinforce commitments to basic humanitarian principles, thus ensuring more war-affected civilians are served.

While aid agencies and their personnel remain at risk as in any conflict situation, agreements on protection of their operations, and of themselves, obviate the call for any military "humanitarian" intervention.

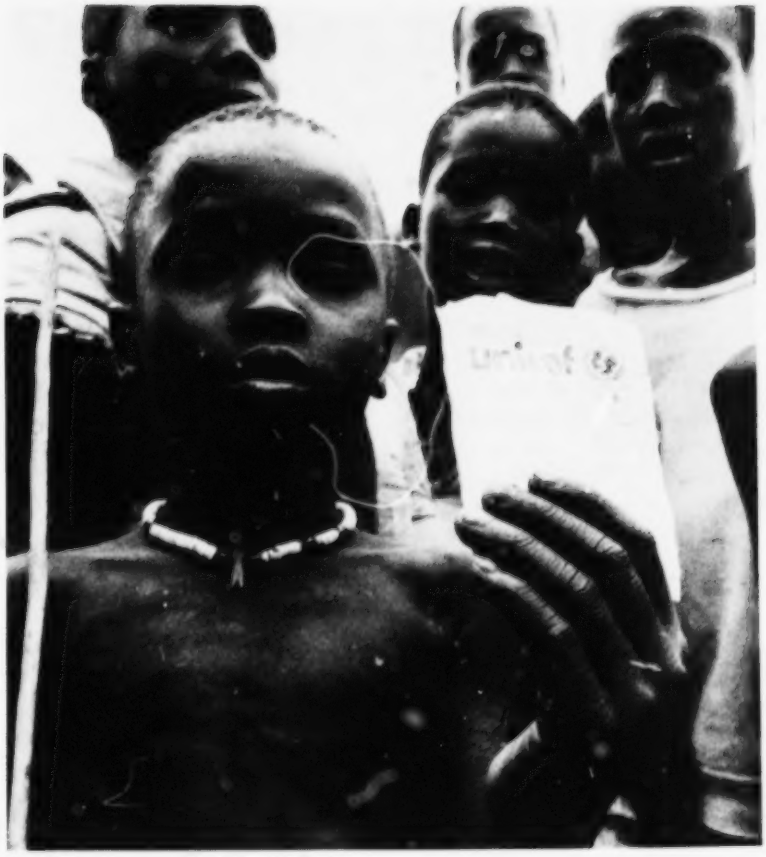

Photo: B. Press/UNICEF

Constraints imposed by negotiated access and the respect for sovereignty and the limits placed on humanitarianism in the name of neutrality have led many critics to urge for the jettisoning of the concept of neutrality between belligerents in favour of a stronger commitment to victims themselves. As Mark Duffield argued in a recent article, "Solidarity rather than neutrality has to be the guiding hand".

Any worthwhile humanitarian operation must be on the side of the victims, and speak to the authorities of their needs. However, while such a call may stir the heartstrings, it is difficult to see how solidarity with victims – whatever this means in practice – might, if juxtaposed with neutrality, provide greater benefits to the victims of conflict, in a situation where such an operation reaches women and children on all sides.

Iain Levine
UNICEF/OLS

Why is aid under fire?

Humanitarian crises in today's geographical, cultural and political context are the core of this *DHA News* "Aid Under Fire" focus, a follow-up to current debates on aid in conflict situations, which we wanted to share with our readers. The articles in this special focus have highlighted key changes in the political, economic and social context of aid policy and practice in the post-Cold era.

Why is aid under fire? The key issue to arise from the Wilton Park seminar and from these papers is that we are presented with one inescapable fact: the old model for viewing the world with a developmental approach, occasionally interrupted by emergencies, no longer corresponds to the reality lived by millions of people, if it ever did. The challenge to the donor community, to the UN and to NGOs, is to transform our organisational structures and our funding policies and procedures so that they better correspond to this reality.

The international community is placing greater emphasis on ensuring access to conflict-affected populations. The targeting of aid workers and supplies by combatants is symptomatic of the changing relationship between combatants and the aid community brought about by the changing nature of war and of humanitarian assistance.

Questions are also being asked about the aid process itself. Are models of development imported from the West politically and culturally appropriate in the vastly different contexts of the former Eastern bloc and of Africa? Is relief and development assistance favouring the strong rather than the weak, increasing inequality and worsening already existing ethnic and national tensions?

The international seminar "Aid Under Fire" underlined the need for swift actions in the fragile, unstable, rapidly changing context of the 1990s. But in order to act adequately we must start almost from the very beginning, with understanding. In this "new world order" or "disorder", conflicts – the curse of humanity – require new solutions which in turn demand a new way of thinking. What has changed? What has failed? Why? And HOW can we come together and help better?

The Wilton Park debates raised some of these issues, a first step. Moving ahead to inform and involve the international community as a whole must be the next. In line with that objective future actions within the "Aid Under Fire" context were proposed and are now under discussion.

Firstly, it is suggested that a survey of donors' policies towards the delivery of aid in unstable situations should be conducted. On the basis of this survey, further discussions could be held at the international level to increase awareness of constraints and to begin the search for solutions.

Secondly, some felt that it would be valuable to assess how best the Code of Conduct for the Red Cross Movement and NGOs could be used in practice. This may require donor recognition of its "seal of approval". It might also be useful to see how far it could be extended to govern the practice of the UN and Bilateral Aid Agencies.

DHA is now considering the creation of a Steering Committee, composed of representatives of the main constituencies, to ensure that the process remains on track.

"Aid Under Fire" marks the beginnning of a process of debate which concerns us all and in which each of us has a part to play. In these pages of *DHA News*, we have tried to share some key humanitarian questions with you. Let us hope that together we can answer some of these questions and find solutions to help reduce the unbearable scope of human suffering.

We wish to thank all the contributors to this focus on "Aid Under Fire" realised in collaboration with ActionAid, ODI and ODA.

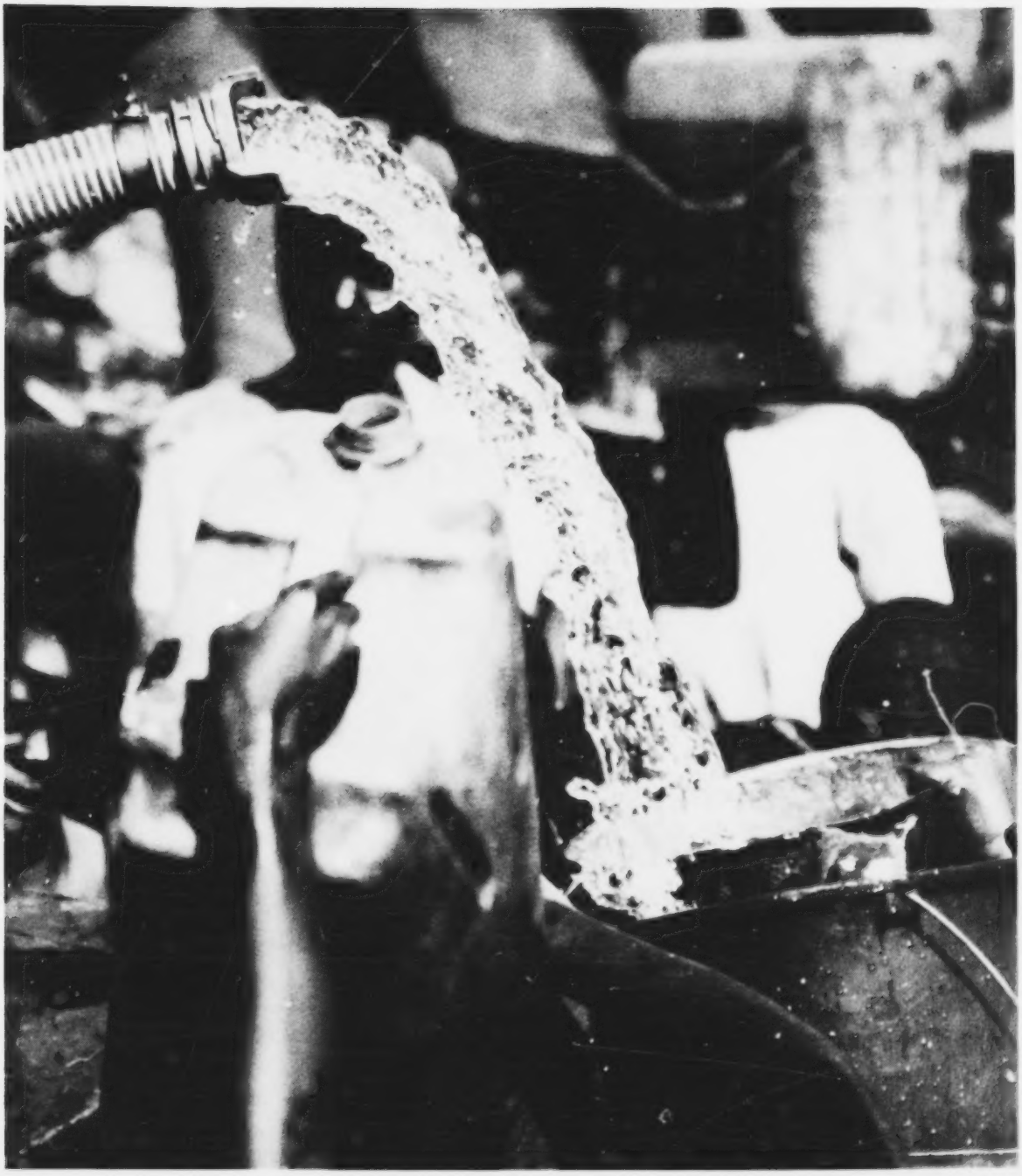

Photo: Morgan Lanham

Will forgiveness ever come?

Rwanda is still trying to come to terms with the events of a year ago. The anniversary of the death of President Juvenal Habyarima on 6 April 1994 was marked by a week of mourning and not, as had been rumoured, by widespread revenge killings. Events later in the month, however, showed that Rwanda has a long way to go to rebuild a multi-ethnic community. Upheavals in Burundi, once Rwanda's sister colony under the Dutch, also caused concern for regional stability.

Despite these incidents the efforts to rebuild Rwanda are going ahead. One of the biggest checks on rehabilitation is funds. Of $766.5 million requested by the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Rwanda to cover all UN programmes in Rwanda and the subregion through 1995, by mid-May $427 million had been pledged. As in most broad-based appeals, aid programmes have been more comprehensively covered than have rehabilitation projects.

Most of the estimated two million Rwandan Hutus who took refuge in other countries have refused to return home. Officials from the former Rwandan regime and their militia continue to spread stories of reprisals and of dispossession. While more than 90,000 people have returned from exile, most of them are Tutsis who fled more than 30 years ago. Meanwhile, reports of military training being conducted outside camps in Zaire, and of cross-border raids, have increased the levels of tension within Rwanda and in the refugee camps. Fortunately, food shortages which were anticipated in March have been resolved, partly by redirecting food from elsewhere in the region, and stocks are now reported to be sufficient at least until June.

At the beginning of the year, the UN, NGOs and Rwandan officials launched "Operation Retour" in an effort to persuade the displaced in camps in the southwest of Rwanda that conditions were safe for return. Government officials and resettled people visited the camps to explain to the IDPs that they had nothing to fear, and IDPs visited their home communes to assess the situation. IDPs began to return and Cyanika camp, the second largest, was closed in the last week of January. While about 20,000 returned to their homes, a significant number of the camp residents moved to other camps in the south.

In early April, the Government of Rwanda decided to step up the camp closures, claiming the camps posed a security risk. As camps were closed, thousands drifted to Kibeho, which nearly doubled in size in a few weeks. On 22 April, as Rwandan troops attempted for the second time to clear Kibeho, a battle erupted between gunmen among the camp population and the soldiers, and a tense stand-off began between the Rwandan army and several thousand camp residents, many of them holed up in the medical compound. Eventually the last of the IDPs came out of Kibeho, but several hundred were arrested for suspected involvement in last year's genocide.

The UN has stepped up efforts to encourage people to return to their home areas, but thousands of the Rwandans from the IDP camps crossed the border to Burundi and Zaire, and thousands remain unaccounted for. For those returning to their home communes, the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) is providing escorts and IOM, UNHCR and NGOs are providing transport. Rehabilitation efforts in home communes have been stepped up since the beginning of the year in an attempt to draw people back home, while UNAMIR and UNHCR provide protection to the returnees.

Justice takes the slow road

Attempts by the Rwandan Government to bring to justice those responsible for last year's horrors have been stymied by a lack of re-

Photo: T. Gassmann/ICRC

sources. The Government has little money and few lawyers, courthouses and computers. Basic office supplies such as telephones, typewriters and paper are still in short supply. Because investigations were not complete, the Government postponed trials due to begin in April, but in the interim prisons are becoming extremely overcrowded, with more than 30,000 people currently detained. UNDP, UNHCHR and the Government have agreed to a $5.265 million project to rehabilitate the judicial system, and is working to expand several prisons. Judges have been selected to head Rwanda's four highest courts, and foriegn judicial officers have been proposed for appointment to the Rwandan courts. The Ministry of Justice has also agreed to transfer 200 imprisoned children under 14 (some charged with genocide) to a youth detention centre.

Rehabilitation projects are proceeding as quickly as possible, given funding shortages and the lack of infrastructure. Several faculties of the National University and some primary schools have been reopened, and WFP is feeding students at boarding schools. National examinations were carried out on 20 March with logistical support from the German Embassy, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNAMIR. A joint project involving Electrogaz, the Canadian International Development Agency, ECHO and UNICEF will rehabilitate Rwanda's electric grid line. The sewage system of Kigali Central Hospital will be repaired.

There have been other notable successes. International organisations have reunited 8,500 children with their parents, and thousands of spontaneous reunions are occurring in Rwanda and the camps. The returnees have begun farming and, following an extensive distribution of seeds and tools by FAO and NGOs, the chances of self-sufficiency later in the year are rising. Cash crops such as coffee and bananas are also under cultivation again. The Government insists that any fallow land taken up will be given back to the owners if they return. Other economic activities have begun, including small-scale banana export. UNICEF is working through women and women's groups to rehabilitate the rural economy.

Tutsis returning from Uganda have brought about 750,000 cattle with them, traditionally an important part of the rural economy. These cattle, however, are currently concentrated in the north where they are overgrazing the land and

could pose a threat to crops in the July-August dry season.

Bloodshed in Burundi

Rwanda and Burundi, historically linked by colonial and ethnic ties, continue to have an impact on each other. Burundi lost its President in the same plane-crash which killed Rwanda's head of state and sparked last year's genocide. Rwanda is still host to Burundi refugees who fled a massacre of Hutus in their homeland in 1993 following the murder of Melchior Ndadaye, the country's first democratically-elected President. Tension within Burundi remains high, as was shown most vividly in late March, when a massacre of Hutus in the capital Bujumbura and reports of other attacks in the north-east led 50,000 Rwandans to flee to the border in Tanzania, which was temporarily closed. UNHCR representatives persuaded most of the refugees to return to the camps in Burundi. The Security Council condemned the killings as "the activities of extreme elements who try to destabilise the country and threaten the whole region".

The recent violence has been contained by a French-brokered peace accord between the ruling Hutu-led Burundi Democratic Front and the Tutsi-dominated military and by a power-sharing government. However, many international observers, including the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Burundi, Ahmedou Ould Abdullah, have concluded that Rwanda and Burundi are "fundamentally unstable" and that violence will continue to occur in both heavily-populated countries until Hutus and Tutsis decide they want peace.

The UN and international agencies are implementing programmes to stabilise the refugee situation and strengthen national structures. Diplomatic efforts to defuse the situation are continuing. However, no amount of intervention, whether diplomatic, humanitarian or military, can resolve the situation if Hutus and Tutsis reject the possibility of living together.

DHA

DHA in Rwanda

Within Rwanda, a wide range of humanitarian activities is being carried out by many UN agencies and more than 140 NGOs. Overall responsibility for humanitarian coordination lies with the Humanitarian Coordinator, at the head of DHA's Rwanda bureau, the UN Rwanda Emergency Office (UNREO).

In order to keep ensure efforts are not duplicated and all sectors are addressed as effectively as possible, regular consultations are chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator involving the Government, UN agencies and the NGO community. To provide more accurate input to these meetings, UNREO has developed the Integrated Humanitarian Operations Centre (IOC).

The IOC is based in an operations room within the Ministry of Rehabilitation in Kigali, and acts as a focal point for information regarding:

- the location and needs of internally displaced people;
- events on the ground as they affect humanitarian organisations;
- assets and locations of humanitarian organisations;
- transport assets of humanitarian, military and Government organisations;
- needs assessments in home communes by sector; and
- security.

The Rwandan Government, UN agencies, a growing number of NGOs and the UNAMIR security force all provide data to the IOC, which is displayed in map form and also kept as a database, contributing to a comprehensive, up-to-date picture of the humanitarian situation.

DHA

Aid effort overshadowed

Despite signs of reconciliation at the beginning of the year, 1995 has become a tense and unstable period in the former Yugoslavia, especially in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Although the world's attention has been captured by the hostage-taking of UN personnel, peace-keepers are not the only ones at risk. The readiness to return to war, and to attack civilian targets, threatens all Bosnians with another round of ethnic cleansing and displacements. The movement of aid convoys into UN safe havens, even to resupply UNPROFOR troops, is being hampered, which has exacerbated food shortages in these zones.

In the first months of 1995, a generally-observed cease-fire allowed the UN to meet its targets for humanitarian deliveries in areas of relative calm. At other times and in other places, relief goods were not able to reach those in need. At the end of May, Bosnian Serb authorities withdrew permission for aid to pass through their lines. Supplies in Sarajevo have now become scarce, adding that city to the list of humanitarian crisis zones.

The abduction of UN personnel has also increased the level of tension. While the world focused on political negotiations to free the hostages, the humanitarian situation throughout Bosnia was deteriorating. After passing the 1,000 flight mark in January, the humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo was suspended on 8 April because of frequent shooting incidents. This airlift, the longest in history, has helped provide a minimum of food and other essentials to the people of Sarajevo through three years of war.

Very little aid has been allowed to the Bihac enclave in the north-west, the only region of Bosnia and Herzegovina where fighting continued throughout the four-month cease-fire agreed at the beginning of the year.

The Croatian Government decision in January to not extend the mandate of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) beyond 31 March added another element of uncertainty to humanitarian efforts. Although the UN has been allowed to maintain observers under the UNCRO (UN Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia) banner, this force has neither the mandate nor the ability to separate factions bent on war, as was demonstrated when Croatian troops occupied UNCRO posts in western Slavonia.

An upsurge in fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina signals a summer of great hardship for the people caught between the guns. The Bosnian Government has vowed to break the siege of Sarajevo this year. However, the civilian population will require continued humanitarian support until the situation changes.

Throughout the war, the international donor community has continued to support the UN's humanitarian operation. The most recent UN consolidated inter-agency appeal for former Yugoslavia, issued in May 1995, asked for an additional $261.5 million to continue funding programmes to aid more than two million people throughout 1995. Of the $241.7 million needed in the first six months, $208.5 million in contributions had been reported to DHA by 31 May, representing 80 percent coverage.

As the war enters its fourth year, hopes for improvements in the daily life of the population remain slim. Hundreds of thousands of people remain refugees, separated from their homes and their families. Humanitarian agencies remain committed to helping these people as long as they can. As stated in the introduction to the latest appeal by Mr. Peter Hansen, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Ms. Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, "We must strive to assist those who depend on our support – the men, women, the children and the elderly who cannot return home, the sick, the wounded and those who deserve our protection".

DHA

UN provides relief through conflict

Despite nearly constant fighting between the Russian army and Chechen rebels since December 1994, international humanitarian agencies have throughout the conflict alleviated the suffering of those affected. Camps for the displaced have been set up and communication channels between detainees and their families have been opened. Co-ordination mechanisms have been established and rehabilitation projects are planned. However, a United Nations appeal asking for $22.9 million to allow for a swift response has been less that 50 percent covered by donor contributions and pledges.

Russia sent troops into the Chechen Autonomous Region to crush the separatist movement on 11 December last year, three years after Dzhokar Dudaev, the Chechen President, had declared Chechnya an independent country. Chechen troops resisted fiercely and widespread fighting followed.

Intense shelling of the Chechen capital Grozny sent most of the city's 400,000 residents fleeing. As Russian troops closed in, the UN called for a temporary cease-fire to allow the evacuation of non-combatants trapped in the city. During a two-day lull in fighting, IOM vehicles evacuated hundreds of civilians. When the fighting re-intensified IOM continued its daily trips into Grozny.

About 300,000 people fled Chechnya to become internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the neighbouring Russian republics of Daghestan (host to an estimated 103,000 IDPs), Ingushetia (150,000) and North Ossetia (40,000), while others have taken refuge within Chechnya. A stream of displaced people is increasing the strains on infrastructure in the neighbouring republics, already stretched by more than 80,000 people who fled the 1992 war between Ingushetia and North Ossetia, and others from Georgia who were uprooted during that country's turmoil. Most of the Chechen displaced are living with host families, sometimes 25 to a room. Those from previous conflicts are still in need of humanitarian assistance. As a result, UN agencies and NGO partners are aiming to help 220,000 of the most needy in the region.

An initial assessment was carried out in January by an inter-agency team led by a Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer from DHA's New York office. The assessment was accompanied by UNHCR and UNICEF relief efforts, which saw distribution of 200 tonnes of relief goods to all three republics by the end of the month. The Flash Appeal for January-June 1995 was launched in early February and updated in March to reflect the rapidly-changing situation. As of 28 April, more than $10 million, or 44.6 percent of the amount requested, had been pledged or delivered.

The Chechen humanitarian operation has once again shown the value of inter-agency coordination. From Moscow, the DHA Coordinator maintains an overall picture of relief efforts, allowing gaps to be identified and resources allocated efficiently. Weekly inter-agency meetings, also attended by donors and NGOs, help disseminate information and ensure agencies cooperate and support each other to the greatest extent possible. The UN is also working closely with national government agencies, including the Russian Ministry for Emergencies (EMERCOM) and the Federal Migration Service (FMS) to avoid duplication. Local authorities such as the Ingush Migration Service are engaged as partners in the humanitarian response.

Sectors have been identified for immediate assistance, and responsibilities assigned to active agencies. Shelter, water and sanitation is needed for those who have not yet found housing with host families. In Daghestan, UNHCR has signed water and sanitation contracts, and a joint IOM/UNHCR shelter project

Photo: B. Norström/UNHCR

has begun. Food assistance is required since the displaced are in many cases unable to buy food, especially in Ingushetia which is suffering from an acute food shortage. IOM, UNHCR and WFP are carrying out various food-supply and import projects. Displaced people and their hosts are also targeted for help to meet their domestic needs, including soap, blankets, kitchen sets, heaters and lanterns. UNHCR has begun erecting prefabricated buildings in Ingushetia and distributing domestic items to IDPs in Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

The health sector is being placed under considerable stress by the large number of displaced. Cholera is endemic in the region, diphtheria outbreaks are becoming common and poliomyelitis threatens to spread in some districts. Displaced children are especially at risk, since immunisation has become less widespread in the past three years. UNICEF health care and vaccination programmes are underway in Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

The lack of resources pledged to UN agencies is posing a threat to the integrated approach of UN humanitarian programmes to comprehensively assist victims of the emergency in all affected areas. Food rations and other resource reserves of local families, which host more than 90 percent of the IDPs, are reported to be nearing exhaustion. The possibility of outbreaks of disease are highly likely unless on-going preventive measures are taken. A similar lack of funding is preventing UNICEF from carrying out the distribution of essential relief items and medicines in temporary settlements in Daghestan. In short, financial and resource constraints are limiting both the geographical and sectoral range of activities that can be undertaken at this critical juncture.

IOM and FMS have begun a study of the implementation of an emergency transitional shelter programme for the capital, since the majority of Grozny's infrastructure has been destroyed. Since resettlement operations began in early March, IOM has returned 2,843 people to Grozny.

Given the nature of the emergency and the number of people affected, there appears to be ample scope to justify the continuation of UN activities in the north Caucasus beyond June. The availability of resources from the donor community will remain the deciding factor in continuing the UN programme to the region.

DHA

Extending the range of DHA's disaster response team

Twenty-nine experts from 15 countries, as well as members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and UNDP took part in the second training course for the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team organized by DHA in Lausanne, Switzerland, 26 March - 7 April. With a current membership of 41 from 12 countries, the UNDAC team provides a concerted immediate international response to the appeal put out by a country when it is confronted with a sudden major disaster. The fate of thousands of victims depends on the speed and efficiency of the relief effort.

"We have arrived at Orevir and found large-scale damage and large numbers of victims. The hospital has been completely destroyed. The following are the most essential needs: medical staff, a field hospital and essential drugs. End of message. Over". On Thursday 6 April at 10 a.m., having been dispatched to the scene of the earthquake following an appeal from DHA's Emergency Operations Centre in Geneva, Dr. Patrick Barriot of the French Civil Defence Directorate (Direction de la Sécurité civile) is sending his first assessment report. He is linked up by VHF radio and Inmarsat satellite with Peter Burton, Head of Disaster Unit, Emergency Aid Department of the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA), who had remained at the emergency of UNDP in Candu, capital of Emirana, the country which had experienced an earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale at 5 a.m. local time on 4 April.

Peter Burton takes note and provides information and the necessary instructions: "Message received. The field hospital is being sent by the Red Cross and should reach you in the next few hours. Can you give an estimate of the number of dead, wounded and displaced persons in the Orevir region? Over".

The On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC), occupying a tent set up at the airport of Grenmla, one of the two towns most seriously affected, is already fully operational. Bernard Gianoli, from the Swiss Disaster Relief Unit, Terje Skavdal, Deputy Director of the Norwegian Council for Mental Health and Michael Gaouette, from the Complex Emergency Division of DHA, provide support to the local authorities by taking stock with them of the evaluation of needs and the coordination of international relief; they meet the representatives of the non-governmental organizations who have arrived on the scene and handle the first requests for interviews by the international media; they prepared to register the research and relief teams and the emergency relief equipment which are due to arrive. Acting as headquarters on the disaster scene, the OSOCC serves as the entry point for international relief.

In the capital, a steady succession of meetings are held at the Ministry of the Interior and the headquarters of UNDP. The ministries concerned, representatives of the armed forces, the civil defence organization, international agencies and non-governmental organizations lay down priorities for relief and funding of the international aid requested by the country in cooperation with the humanitarian coordinator, Seyril R. Siegel, currently Resident Representative of UNDP in Caracas, as well as with the United Nations disaster management team and Gérard Le Claire of the DHA Relief Coordination Branch, head of the team. On the basis of all the information received, Gérard Le Claire is to draft a situation report to be faxed to the DHA in Geneva and, from there, distributed to all the donor countries.

While Emirana and the above-mentioned earthquake are imaginary, the simulation exercise at the Swiss Civil Defence Centre at Gollion near Lausanne is a very real

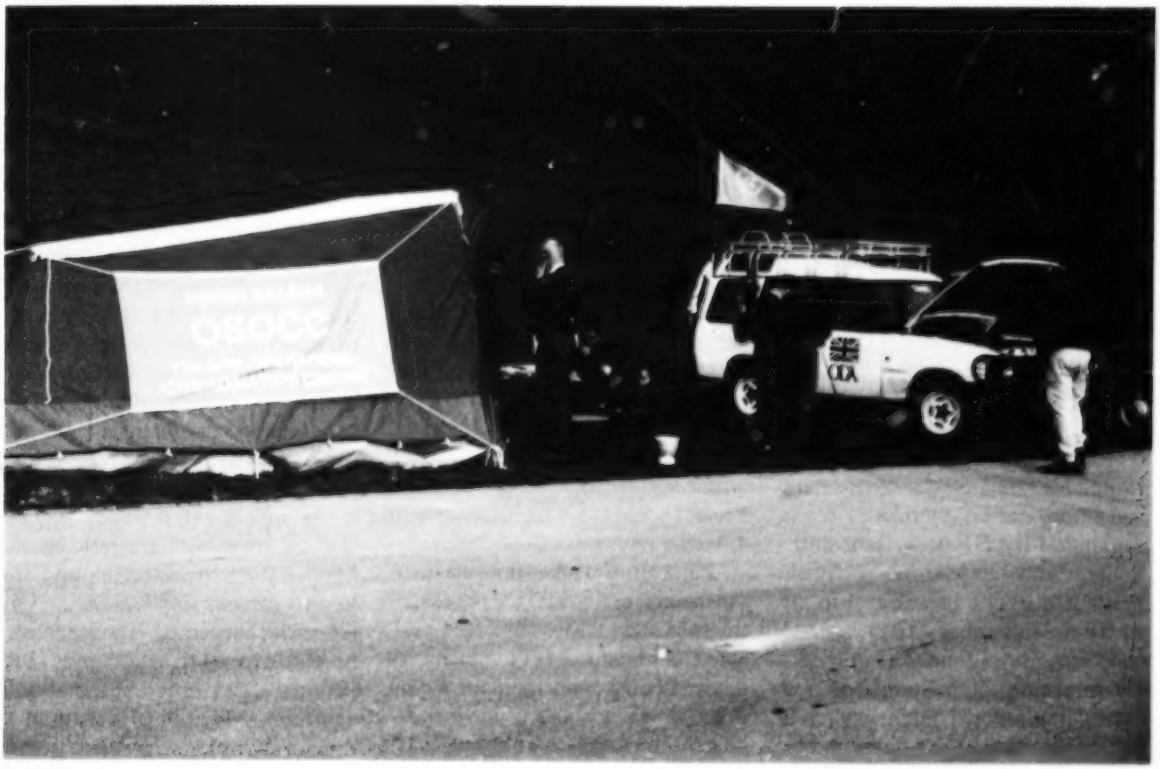

Photo: DHA

one. It is based on situations which all the participants - doctors, chemists, fire-fighters, military and civil defence personnel, officials in the emergency services of their countries - have experienced. The difference this time is that the experts concerned are members of a United Nations team, UNDAC. Their national and international experience of emergencies is harnessed to a common approach established over two weeks of training, culminating in the simulation exercise.

Establishment of assessment and coordination machinery, use of ultramodern communications equipment, knowledge of the different United Nations agencies, handling of the media aspects of the event, etc.: the second training course in Lausanne, sponsored like the first in 1993 by the Swiss Government, makes the emergency manager a member of UNDAC. Each member of UNDAC is a volunteer, albeit selected and sponsored by his Government and will go back to national duties on completion of his training. He will be available at all times to provide the first-level United Nations response when crisis strikes. "We believe that broad participation by member states in the UNDAC team contributes to transparency and greater effectiveness of our assessment and coordination activities. This in turn results in a more efficient mobilisation and use of international resources in response to an emergency," says Ola Almgren, DHA officer in charge of UNDAC.

"One of the main results of this course is the establishment of a team spirit and we are now well aware of our capacities", according to Sergei Makarov, Chief Expert, General Department for International Cooperation in the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations (EMERCOM), who was an army officer before becoming a United Nations peace-keeper. His compatriot, Vladimir Melnik, who served as a volunteer in Armenia in 1988

"The United Nations gains in efficiency through the UNDAC approach and strengthens the capacities of all parties at the local level."

before joining the EMERCOM, considers that "the use of a common language to resolve emergency problems" is essential.

As far as Patrick Barriot is concerned, "it is very important to have a single chain of command for both assessment and coordination". This anaesthetist/intensive care specialist, whose experience in the Paris fire brigade took him to Mexico at the time of the 1985 earthquake and Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991, found that there is little mixing between relief teams, mainly because of the language barrier and the existence of bilateral arrangements. "The vertical hierarchy is more pronounced in bilateral arrangements, whereas the United Nations has a richer horizontal fabric", according to Bernard Gianoli of the Swiss Relief Unit, who worked in Africa for 15 years and considers that "group dynamics and the harnessing of individual experience constitute the strength of UNDAC. Account has to be taken of a set of parameters, progress is made by ensuring that all the parties have the same level of information and are prepared to communicate."

Dr. Mukesh Kapila of the ODA, whose experience includes Rwanda, Angola and Bosnia, sees the key to UNDAC's success as lying in the fact that it is fully involved in the initial assessment and creates "neither overlap nor gap", and this is confirmed by Terje Skavdal of the Norwegian Council for Mental Health: "We are looking more and more at the problem of duplication. The United Nations gains in efficiency through the UNDAC approach and strengthens the capacities of all parties at the local level."

At a time when the sums allocated to emergencies have become colossal, it is important "to have the best value for money, as it is in the interest of the victims that everything be well organized". Peter Burton considers that DHA has done very good research on the machinery for evaluating the needs of persons affected by a disaster. He also feels that much of the success of a mission has to do with the choice of team: "The right people, at the right place, at the right time".

"We select the members of UNDAC from among general emergency practitioners, although many of them possess very specific skills" explains Robert Souria, Chief of the Relief Coordination Branch: "the size of the teams - from four to 15 persons or even more if the scale of the disaster so requires - as well as the duration of each mission (from a few days to three weeks) vary according to the emergency. Once needs have been assessed and the local relief coordination structures are in place, UNDAC's mission is over".

Since its establishment in 1993, UNDAC has intervened in Nepal, India, Mauritius, Mozambique, Bangladesh, China, Rwanda, Egypt, Djibouti, Haiti, Cape Verde and Russia for the Sakhalin earthquake. Australia, France, Italy and Russia have recently joined Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland. Eleven DHA staff are also members of UNDAC. The latter will soon see the addition of a regional team in Latin America. A training course was held in Quito in June. "As UNDAC's very purpose is to be on the scene of a disaster as quickly as possible, the advantage of a local team is that it can get to work quickly. In emergency situations, the time factor is of capital importance", Robert Souria points out.

During the most recent UNDAC mission, to Russia's Sakhalin Island in May, a team was on its way within an hour of the request being received from the Russian Govenment. The four-member team was able to inform the international relief community of the actions being taken and to report that international relief was not needed, preventing the wasteful dispatch of international relief teams.

DHA

Not cutting the lifeline

Although the multinational military force in Somalia completed its pull-out of the capital Mogadishu at the end of February, international aid organisations and the UN's humanitarian agencies have continued the delivery of humanitarian aid in Somalia. UN agencies and NGOs have been in Somalia since 1991, and their work will continue as long as needs remain unmet, funding is available and the security situation is stable enough to allow relief activities to be carried out.

The latest UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia, launched in December, asked for $70.3 million to cover mostly emergency needs in the first six months of 1995. UN agencies have focused their resources on the most vulnerable segments of the population such as internally displaced people, refugees, women, children and the handicapped. Short-term rehabilitation projects are being implemented in those areas where local leaders and organisations have shown their willingness to work with international agencies to rebuild infrastructure.

The support of local authorities and the populace is seen as a precondition to any development activities. The involvement of community-based organisations has strengthened many assistance efforts and laid the groundwork for continued development. No other method can hope to achieve a sustainable result.

Photo: B. Press/UNHCR

The international community, however, has responded poorly to the UN's appeal for aid after spending more than $3 billion on the security operation. By the end of April donors had donated just $13.1 million to the 1995 appeal, or 18.7 percent of the amount requested.

Despite widespread fears that renewed fighting would follow the

pull-out of the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) on 3 March, the level of violence since the withdrawal has been much lower than in the months before the US-led intervention in November 1992. Alerted by threats of renewed war between rival clans, UN agencies evacuated their staff from Mogadishu with the military personnel.

While the city has remained relatively calm, the situation is still too unpredictable to allow the return of international staff on a permanent basis, but national officers maintain the operation of UN programmes in the Mogadishu area. In other parts of the country where UNOSOM had earlier withdrawn or had never been present, the evacuation had little effect on programmes.

Following a peace plan agreed by the two main rival factions in Mogadishu, on 11 March an agreement was signed between the two clans to jointly administer the sea and airports. UN-trained and equipped Somali police are providing security within the port perimeters, and different militia are being integrated into a unified command to secure access routes through the city. Although this experiment in joint administration is still in its infancy, ships have begun to offload at the port and exports of livestock, once a major part of Somalia's economy, have resumed.

Integrated approach to coordination required

In the Somali context, coordination demands an overall picture of changing needs, resources and threats to security without compromising the ability of organisations to respond to local situations. The UN Coordination Team for Somalia (UNCT) is headed by the UNDP Resident Respresentative and contains senior staff of UN agencies and organisations in Somalia.

Established in 1994, the UNCT provides DHA with a 'new generation' structures, enabling the rapid collection and dissemination of information to avoid a patchy response to humanitarian needs. The UNCT cooperates with international and indigenous NGOs, and works to support the coordination efforts of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body.

WFP is channelling its resources towards institutional rehabilitation in stable regions. Food is being provided to teachers and health workers in lieu of wages, as well as to school-children, hospital patients, farmers and demobilised soldiers. The aid is helping reintegrate those who have been economically unproductive and enable social services to continue to function.

About 150,000 refugees have returned to Somalia since mid-1993, and internally displaced people have begun returning to their homes. UNHCR has implemented quick-impact projects to improve the living conditions of returnees and FAO has been providing agricultural inputs such as draught animals, poultry and assistance in pest management, although funding restraints have inevitably forced cuts to programmes.

The health situation has been of particular concern, considering the low rate of vaccination and the poor availability of safe water in Somalia. As priorities, UNICEF and WHO have targeted primary health care for young children and pregnant and lactating women, and access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. A recent outbreak of cholera in Baidoa, Kismayo, Mogadishu and other areas of the country was contained by the swift action of UNICEF and WHO in cooperation with NGOs.

In the face of these successes and of the many challenges which still face Somalia, it is disturbing that donors appear to have lost their willingness to remain involved in helping the country overcome its violent and unhappy recent past.

DHA

An unexpected shake-up

The entire world was staggered when it realised the extent of the damage which the Japanese city of Kobe suffered on 17 January. More than 5,500 people died when an unexpected earthquake jolted the city's 1.5 million people awake an hour before dawn, and estimates of direct damage have topped $100 billion. In the aftermath, disaster planners around the world are analysing the quake and integrating the lessons into mitigation plans.

Despite scientific advances, earthquakes are still largely unpredictable. They can hit without warning and in unlikely places. The Nojima Active Fault, the epicentre of Kobe's earthquake, was dormant for 1,000 years before January, and had never been considered a threat by Kobe's earthquake mitigation and response plan. Buildings in Kobe are designed rather to resist typhoons from the Pacific Ocean, a more frequent threat than earthquakes.

At 7.2 on the Richter scale, the Kobe earthquake rated no higher than a dozen other seismic events in Japan in the past 10 years. However, the epicentre was only 20 kilometres southeast of Kobe's central business district, and relatively shallow at 14 kilometres below the surface of the ocean.

The seismic intensity was estimated at 12 on the Modified Mercali Scale, far higher than the local plan allowed for. The high intensity of the quake and the severity of the damage caused has been attributed to the way the ground moved. Most of Japan's major earthquakes have been deep-ocean tectonic movements which produce sideways shifts but no major vertical movement. The Kobe earthquake, by comparison, was a "shallow direct hit".

Shallow but hard

This resulted in severe upwards movement, accompanied by a sharp horizontal jerk. Unusually for a massive earthquake, there were no warning rumbles, partly because of the proximity of the epicentre. The whiplash effect of the shaking and the sudden upward heave tore wooden housing beams from their joints, ruptured walls, gas and water pipes, and brought down roofs and ceilings. More than 95 percent of the fatalities occurred in the first 15 minutes after the earthquake, as people were crushed by the sheer weight of their homes or were hit directly by falling objects.

Older wooden houses were most severely affected. Built on frames of wood with heavy tiled roofs, traditional houses are designed to stand up to the rigours of tropical storms. The initial shock destroyed the joints between beams and columns, bringing down the entire structure. Some temples and shrines, mostly built in the same fashion, were also badly damaged. Older buildings with light-weight roofs, as well as newer pre-fabricated constructions, escaped with less damage. Most of the historic western buildings built of stone at the turn of the century, however, were destroyed.

In some parts of Kobe, reclaimed land was 'liquified', shaken apart by the force of the quake. Roads split, overhead highways tumbled.

The scale of the disaster hampered relief efforts from the beginning. Safety features immediately cut electricity to 3.6 million households, and one million of them remained without power until damaged wiring and systems were repaired. In the pre-dawn chaos, Kobe was largely dark. Roads were blocked, at first only by tumbled buildings, but soon long-haul transit traffic and residents trying to get around the city added to the confusion. Local and regional train services ground to a halt. Phone lines were cut and a switchboard was damaged, isolating 285,000 phones. Phone-lines which did function jammed for more than 12 hours as people tried to call relatives and friends. Disaster management

Photo: Hyogo Prefectural Government

officials had trouble reaching their offices or even finding out what was happening.

Policemen, fire-fighters and medical personnel were also cut off from their duty stations, many of which had been damaged by the earthquake. Six of Kobe's main police stations suffered major structural damage, as did several fire stations. Even when the fire engines were freed from their garages, the fire command centre was unable to tell officers where to go. The fire surveillance camera was out of action for the first two hours, and the computer controlling emergency calls was overloaded to the point of paralysis. Pilots of reconnaissance helicopters were unable to reach their craft for three hours. When people turned up at fire stations, officers went with them, often on foot, to the fire outbreaks. Police surveys of local damage turned into rescue efforts, leaving command centres understaffed and without a picture of the full situation.

Fighting fire was a top priority. No-one wanted a repeat of the 1923 tragedy in Tokyo, when fires engulfed the city after the great Kanto earthquake. But even when fire engines reached the site of a fire, the resources were meagre, and the flames had spread too far to be quickly extinguished. Water pressure in pipes quickly dropped away, and there were more fires than the emergency crews could cope with at once.

Although fire crews helped with rescue operations, the initial searching of most of the 87,000 destroyed houses was done by relatives of the missing. There were far too many damaged buildings for professional rescue workers to search all of them in the critical first hours.

The earthquake injured more than 40,000 people, while at the same time damaging or destroying 103 of Kobe's 112 hospitals and 763 of the 1,363 medical clinics. Electricity, gas and water supplies were cut, equipment was smashed or displaced and spoiled medicines. Faced with thousands of injuries, health workers did not have time to search disaster manuals for official contact numbers and telephone lines were in any case overloaded.

City and prefecture government response was hampered by damage to their buildings in Kobe's centre, where the seismic intensity was at a peak. Staff were unable to reach their posts, offices were in disarray, the control computer for the prefecture's emergency radio telephone network was damaged, and national authorities could not be reached.

Officials had to wait until NHK, the national broadcaster, began

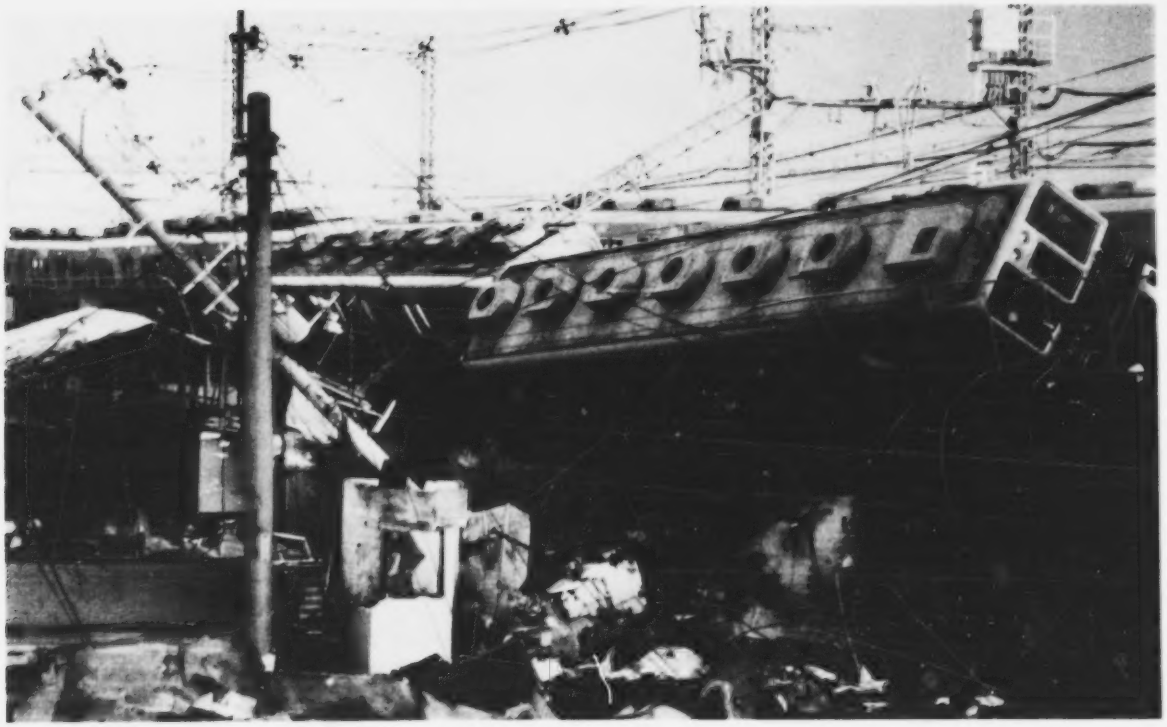

Photo: Hyogo Prefectual Government

showing live footage of Kobe an hour after the earthquake before they could grasp the extent of the damage. Full-scale assistance began soon after, and by the end of the day nearly 5,000 earthquake professionals, supported by hundreds of vehicles and dozens of helicopters, had arrived in Kobe from all over Japan. The sheer volume of assistance caused problems, as water tankers, engineering teams and medical supplies became stuck in the traffic. Because of the extremely built-up nature of Kobe, blocked roads were common and some arterial roads became completely impassable.

The lack of space in Kobe posed further problems for the relief effort. Evacuees filled the schoolgrounds and other public spaces. Helicopters did not have room to set down to evacuate critical medical cases. Distribution of food and blankets began, but some people were inaccessible.

More kindness than common sense

The international response to the scenes from Kobe was to offer human and material assistance. Although the Japanese Government was grateful for the expressions of goodwill, it explained that Japanese rescue workers were already at the scene and more would be arriving before international assistance could arrive. Language and logistical problems would be created by the on-site presence of large numbers of foreign rescue workers and media.

However, on 19 and 20 January international search and rescue teams arrived in Kobe and some helped to search buildings. By this time, Japanese teams had covered most of the likely survival sites.

International medical assistance was also offered and, when appropriate, accepted. However, Japan had large stocks of in-country medicine and enough doctors to staff all medical facilities. International doctors who were fluent in Japanese and knew Japanese medical procedures and preferences were

The sheer volume of assistance caused problems, as water tankers, engineering teams and medical supplies became stuck in traffic

welcomed. The rapidly-changing medical needs of the affected people made international offers of medical supplies less useful. After the first day, most medical problems were not earthquake injuries but related to the conditions of the evacuees (colds, influenza, fatigue and indigestion).

Offers of other material assistance were also welcomed, and gratefully accepted when they were useful. In all, 76 countries and international associations offered in-kind or cash assistance.

The US made available 37,000 blankets from emergency military stocks deliverd to nearby Itami airport, and later supplied more blankets, tents, plastic sheets and sleeping mats. Marines stationed on Okinawa helped set up the tents in shoolyards.

Distributing international supplies was made difficult by the damage done to the road connecting Kansai International Airport to the city of Kobe, but non-perishable food items which were in short supply and non-food items which were useful were always accepted. Plastic sheeting and blankets were particularly put to good use. Bottled mineral water, normally a luxury in Japan, was also valuable, since it could be easily loaded onto trucks or carts and handed out to individuals. Instant noodles and canned food from international donors were also widely distributed. Germany, aware of the need for warm clothing, made a local purchase of large quantities of sportswear, which was welcomed by the residents of Kobe.

In total, donors reported to DHA contributions totalling $13.4 million, which does not include donations with no given value.

Finding the facts

Since the earthquake event caused such severe damage in what was thought a safe city, a large number of requests for international fact-finding missions were received. Local authorities asked that these missions be postponed for one month while all available manpower was devoted to immediate relief and rehabilitation. When international researchers did turn up, they were given briefings but were unable to conduct interviews with relief workers and engineers on site. In view of the intense interest in Kobe, Japanese academic institutions opened information centres for researchers coming from abroad. The Institute of Industrial Science of the University of Tokyo began KOBENET, an electronic database on the Internet to provide all the available scientific documents and answer queries from international scholars. Enquiries from people outside Japan trying to contact friends and relatives were handled by the Japanese Red Cross in cooperation with NHK.

Within hours of the earthquake, DHA had begun real-time monitoring of the disaster. Throughout the emergency phase of the disaster, DHA issued 10 information reports to accurately inform the international community of the rapidly-evolving situation, and fielded queries from relief agencies and search and rescue teams wanting to know if their assistance was required. Once the immediate relief phase was over, DHA sent a fact-finding mission to Japan to assess the international response. The 28 February - 10 March mission concluded that the massive outpouring of international goodwill was not matched by a full understanding of the capabilities of the Japanese response or of the restrictions of operating in an intensely built-up area. This led to cases of inappropriate donations of relief goods, such as perishable food and massive tents which could not be erected because of space constraints. The national disaster response system, though heavily burdened by the needs of those affected by disaster, was capable of meeting most of those needs.

The DHA mission report is available upon request.

DHA

Sleeping volcano wakes

Fogo Volcano, which began to erupt on 3 April, is still not stable, according to a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team which visited the Cape Verde island group shortly after the activity began.

Fogo Island, one of nine inhabited islands of the Cape Verde group, 650 km off the coast of Senegal, had been undisturbed by its volcano for more than 40 years. Previous activity has created a wide lava 'floor', called a caldera, which is one of the few flat surfaces on Fogo. Within the caldera, people have built houses and planted crops. The volcano's cone rises from the valley floor, only a few kilometres from the coast.

The 3 April eruption sent lava flowing through a fissure on the western side of the cone. Ash, cinders and lava destroyed scattered houses and one village, and ruined a significant portion of Fogo's farmland. People living nearby were evacuated but no lives were lost.

The international response has been generous and prompt, and local authorities are coping with the current 1,300 displaced people. The Government of Cape Verde has set up tent camps for the 900 people without shelter and is providing electricity and communal facilities such as water and sanitation, central kitchens and kindergartens.

Photo: DHA

Threat remains

Fresh lava continues to seep to the surface, and now covers about five square kilometres within the caldera. Although the volume of the new flows has decreased and the volcano is showing signs of reduced activity, explosions and moderate to strong volcanic tremors continue to rock the area. The pooled lava could threaten up to 6,000 more people if, as projected, it continues to build up and overflows the caldera's eastern rim later in the year.

The UNDAC team which visited Togo 12-18 April was sent to assess the situation and provide support to local authorities in their response to the eruption. DHA released an emergency grant of $30,000 and two Belgian air force planes airlifted relief goods donated by Italy from DHA's Pisa warehouse to the affected area. Portugal, France and the US sent teams of volcanologists to the island to help local authorities monitor the situation. The US and the Federation provided support through the local Red Cross society.

In view of the threat posed by the volcano, local and national authorities have begun building, with the help of DHA, a natural disaster mitigation plan. "The team found that immediate emergency relief had

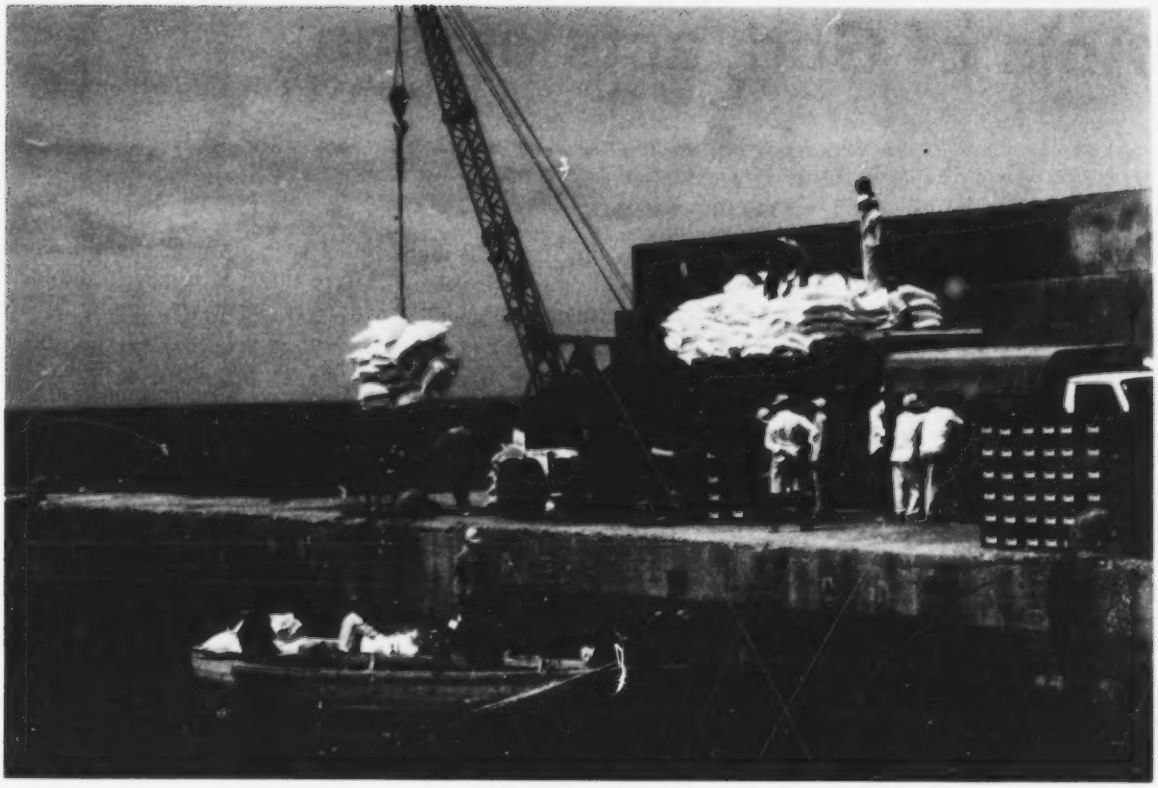

Photo: DHA

been taken care of by local authorities, the national Red Cross society and the UN agencies in Cape Verde," explains Flemming Neilssen, the leader of the UNDAC team. "The most pressing concern is to ensure the safety of those most at risk. For this reason, the team recommended that DHA assist the authorities in building up a preparedness to counter a worsening of the situation."

Britain has installed a temporary network of five siesmographs so that the situation can be monitored closely in the short-term. Plans exist to evacuate livestock from the crater if that becomes necessary, and to remove people from the lava's path. Local people are being trained by the US vulcanologist in cooperation with the Portuguese and French teams, and an emergency stockpile of food and fuel is being organised.

Other measures being carried out or considered include installing a permanent seismograph to monitor the volcano, building up a civil communications system and completing the road which circles Fogo. There is also a need for an alternative air-strip and for upgrading port facilities, which currently cannot be used in rough weather, either for unloading supplies or evacuating people. New homes for the permanently displaced must also be found, and arrangements made for possible future displacements.

Many of the actions taken in response to the volcano emergency are related to development issues. Enhancing the medical system to cope with possible displacement, improving access to the island and vulnerable areas and ensuring effective communication would all have significant beneficial effects on the daily life on Fogo.

DHA

Acts of God, acts of Man

From the press reports, one could imagine that last year's forest fire in the Galapagos Islands was a disaster; that the islands which provided the stimulus for Darwin's famous theory of evolution were in grave danger of being destroyed. As with many press reports, the truth was somewhat different. The fires certainly, and rightly, aroused international attention; however, the extraordinary wildlife of the islands were not in serious danger from a single fire, but from the cumulative effects of less dramatic, but potentially more deadly sources.

An act of Man

The fire was discovered on April 11th 1994 in the heartland of the national park on the island of Isabela, the largest in the Galapagos Archipelago. Experts in the field suggest that a camp fire started by a party hunting illegally in the National Park provided the initial sparks that within days brought in top fire experts from around the world.

The fire was no natural event; like many emergencies, what seems "natural" can often mask a human influence that caused or aggravated a natural phenomenon. Such hybrid emergencies are often called "Na-Techs" to reflect their Natural and Technological origins. If the cause of the fire were not enough to condemn the fire as a man-made event, the progress of the flames could aiso thank human intervention for its success.

The native vegetation on Isabela has to struggle against aggressive species introduced by man. The Guayaba (*Psidium guajava*) is something of a paratrooper in the plant world. Since its appearance on the islands it has squeezed out native species that simply can't compete. Guayaba also burns very fiercely and allows fire to spread rapidly compared with the native species. US Forestry Service experts noted that when the fire spread in a wind, the thick, burning leaves of the Guayaba would fly for more than half a kilometre to produce secondary fires. Combine the spark of a human fire with a plant that doesn't naturally belong and you have a major man-made emergency rather than natural disaster.

An international response

In an area as precious as the Galapagos, any threat has to be treated seriously as an international problem. A similar fire in a less precious site would probably not have received widespread press and international attention, but in the Galapagos nobody was prepared to take any chances.

Experts from around the world were flown in to advise the local army commanders, monitor the fire and assess the environmental impact. The UN was alerted through the Relief Coordination Branch of DHA in Geneva, which has the UN mandate to coordinate the international response to disasters irrespective of cause. Requests for funding and equipment were sent out around the world and DHA, with the help of specialists in environmental emergencies from the UNEP, settled down to the task of keeping track of the fire and sending out regular Situation Reports to keep the world informed of the progress of the flames, the plight of the environment and the needs of the firefighters.

Countries such as the USA, Canada, Finland, Chile and Japan contributed expertise, equipment and money to help the Ecuadorians fight the flames. Such bilateral assistance is often the quickest and most efficient form of international aid.

Those contributions would prove vital; the islands are nearly nine hundred kilometres off the Ecuadorian mainland and everything needed to fight the fire had to come by plane, helicopter or boat. Most of the international donations was used to pay the costs of moving everything from bulldozers to army rations and walkie-talkies. Without the donations, in cash and in kind,

Photo: N Sitwell

the logistical problems would have been a nightmare.

On the fire line

Within 20 days the fire had consumed an area of some 9,000 hectares (20,000 acres). On the ground, the fire fighting was difficult. The island is a geological infant and soil has not yet developed on top of the convoluted and fissured lava bedrock. This allowed the fire to burn deep inside the fractures, making fighting difficult and exhausting work.

The experts from donor countries were impressed with the response strategy adopted by the local commanders. The Ecuadorian officials had been trained in forest fire-fighting and put their training to good practice, highlighting the importance of thorough preparedness for such events. The main tactic, given the terrain, the logistical problems and the way the fire was burning, was to contain the flames rather than try to put them out. The imported bulldozers cut firebreaks around the hillsides, isolating the fires with broad swathes through the vegetation. Johannah Barry, the Executive Director of the US office of the Charles Darwin Foundation noted early in the emergency that "the fire is likely to burn until the rains come – it is burning in a mosaic pattern deep in the ground but now that it has been successfully contained the major worry is over". That assessment proved to be correct and the deep-seated fires were eventually extinguished by rain – nature solving a man-made problem.

Na-Techs - modern disa. rs

Research has shown that disasters are not the straightforward events we might initially imagine. Dividing disasters into Natural (Acts of God) and Technological (Acts of Man) is not as easy as it might sound. For example, if an earthquake (natural) destroys an oil pipeline (man-made) which leads to a pollution incident, is it an Act of God for the earthquake or an Act of Man for not designing, building or routing the pipeline to take such events into account? UNEP has taken on the term "Na-Tech" (Natural - Technological) to describe disasters which have a hybrid origin. There are four basic types of disaster event under such a system:

- **Natural disasters** that are the result of purely natural processes, e.g. an earthquake.
- **Na-Tech (fast)** where technological disasters are caused by natural events damaging chemical plants, power stations, storage sites, pipelines.
- **Na-Tech (slow)** where human impacts such as pollution contribute to a natural event, e.g. pollution leading to global warming, forest fires etc.
- **Technological** where a technology fails for human or engineering reasons, e.g. chemical and oil spills from transportation accidents.

As industrialisation increases in developing countries, it is likely that we will see an increase in such Na-Techs – especially in areas traditionally prone to extreme natural events such as floods, cyclones and earthquakes.

Management Implications

Experience has shown that the most effective way of coping with a disaster uses a multi-hazard, multi-agency approach at all levels with the **Disaster Management Cycle** as the foundation. This cycle starts with **Prevention** and moves on to include **Preparedness-Response-Recovery-Prevention**. By moving through the cycle, the lessons are learned which can be incorporated into future planning. In the Galapagos example, the following approach can be seen:

- **Prevention** could include strong enforcement of anti-hunting laws to control camp fires;
- **Preparedness** would be the preparing contingency plans and training and equiping staff;
- **Response** is bringing the planning, logistics and leadership to meet the needs of the emergency
- **Recovery** is trying to re-establish the burned areas – not simply to the pre-fire condition of non-native plants, but, ideally, to where endemic regrowth can be ensured.

DHA

The environmental impact

Environmental emergencies are particularly complicated; often, we simply do not know enough about the ecosystem to say for certain whether an incident has been an environmental disaster or just a near miss. With the Galapagos, the uncertainties about the impacts were reflected in the dramatic press reports. As with every emergency, the worst had to be assumed until proved otherwise.

As a result, the outside world was worried that the island's environment would be destroyed by the flames. It now seems that the rapid response, both locally and internationally, helped prevent the fire from causing serious long term damage; preventing the emergency from becoming a disaster - for example, not one of the famous rare tortoises were harmed by the flames.

Photo: N. Sitwell

In fact, now the danger is over, many ecologists see the fire as presenting an opportunity for environmental benefit. We know relatively little about how such a fragile ecosystem responds to the stress of a fire and how it will regenerate over the years. Ecologists are now concerned that seeds of the opportunistic Guayaba plant – which made up ninety per cent of the burned vegetation – will regenerate the area more quickly than native species. Researchers are hoping to offset that problem. The scientists are now trying to find ways to help the native plants establish an early root-hold that will allow the endemic species to make the best use of the temporary disappearance of the Guayaba. The idea is to learn the lessons from the emergency to try to prevent a similar emergency happening again.

Gonzalo Oviedo, from WWF International, highlighted the need to see a long-term perspective – "it is one thing to fight the fires, but we must also look to the future to ensure the islands are protected from the more important threats such as habitat destruction, fishing and competition from introduced species".

The True Disaster

The major threat to the tortoises, blue-footed boobies, marine iguanas and a myriad of unique species is not fire, but human actions. Three issues stand out; increasing populations social pressures and introduced species.

The population on the island is growing as Ecuadorians colonize the remote archipelago. Unfortunately, there is little in the way of natural resources to sustain a growing human population – agriculture is difficult because there little soil has had time to develop on the young volcanic rock. With growing human numbers and limited resources, experts are worried that the fragile island ecosystems simply cannot sustain the uncontrolled colonisation. One of the manifestations of such growth is increased social pressures, which cause problems for the humans and the wildlife.

Fishing for shark and sea cucumber used to be profitable. The sea cucumbers were dried and sold on to the Asian market where they were consumed for medicinal purposes. Recently, the Ecuadorian

government banned the fishing which infuriated the fishermen. During the fire-fighting, the corpses of at least 31 giant tortoises were discovered. All had been killed deliberately. Nobody is sure of the identity of the culprits, but some see the killings as retaliation by the hard-pressed fishermen. Social problems such as access to resources and crime receive few international promises of equipment, expertise and hard cash. The social problems can only be sorted out by the Ecuador government, even if they are one of the main dangers to the native animals and plants. Conservation is not just science; most of the really difficult decisions involve politics.

Another threat to the wildlife comes from the introduced species, especially rats which eat the tortoise eggs. Rats, goats, cattle and numerous plant species are all remnants of human activity in the islands during the last 250 years. On an island that has taken nature millions of years to create a balance, the sudden introduction of animals and plants that don't belong can wreak havoc with the ecosystem, breaking the delicate links in the food chain and threatening the integrity of the entire habitat.

Unfortunately, world attention is more focused on the quick fix; when a fire starts, put it out. Towards long-term conservation issues, like all disaster prevention and preparedness, the response is more muted. There is relatively little money put forward for long term projects and the press often turns up only when a dramatic story can be written. In retrospect, the Galapagos Fire of 1994 is a disaster that never was thanks to local and international efforts; the social and long-term conservation issues are potential disasters waiting to happen but who is going to solve these problems?

DHA

Environmental emergencies: when is a disaster a disaster?

Disasters such as earthquakes and tornados cause massive destruction and kill thousands of people every year. The scale and significance of such disasters depends on the number of people killed and injured, the property damaged and the economic losses sustained. With environmental emergencies, whether due to industrial accidents, chronic pollution, fire or habitat destruction, it's a lot more complicated. The complexity of air, water and soil systems and the need to examine them on a long term basis means that we still know relatively little about how ecosystems respond the stress caused by pollution and accidents. This relative ignorance causes three crucial problems:

- Difficulty in identifying impacts; pollution is often not noticed until too late.
- Difficulty in measuring and quantifying the degree of impact; how badly has the system been damaged?
- Difficulty in assessing the ecosystem response to stress and therefore the longterm implications and significance of an event; how will the environment cope with the impact?

In July 1994 UNEP and DHA established a specialist Joint Environment Unit to try to incorporate the environmental considerations into disaster response and to focus attention of such emergencies as chemical and oil spills. Staffed by UNEP professionals, the Unit is fully integrated into the Relief Coordination Branch where it is in the process of adapting the existing 24-hour response service to incorporate environmental emergency considerations. Since 1994 the Unit has provided assistance to emergencies in Albania, Mozambique, Romania and Djibouti as well as organizing the UN assessment mission to the major oil spills in the Komi Republic of the Russian Federation.

DHA

DHA at Work
January-April 1995

Natural Disasters

Relief Operations

Afghanistan - Landslides

On 27 March at 23:00 local time a remote village in Badakhshan Province near the Tajikistan border was struck by a landslide which killed 313 people and destroyed 106 houses. A second landslide claimed 37 lives. Major roads are completely blocked in winter and the only way to reach the affected area was on horseback. It took four days for the news to reach the provincial capital. UNOCHA office in Islamabad was immediately informed and asked to provide assistance by local authorities. A UN mission was sent. WFP and UNICEF provided relief materials, and DHA released $30,000 for local purchases. Two information reports were issued.

Argentina - Floods

Unusual heavy rainfall in the province of Buenos Aires on 10 April caused the river passing the town of Pergamino to overflow. One quarter of the town of 100,000 inhabitants was reported inundated and 8,000 people were evacuated. Three people died and one was reported missing. 100,000 hectares of soyabean were damaged. DHA issued one information report.

Bangladesh - Tropical storms

Severe storms (tornados) hit different parts of Bangladesh on 8 April. Thousand of houses were damaged in the Madarpur area, in Munshiganj near Dhaka and in Cox's Bazaar. Out of the total of 60 deaths, 40 people were killed in Munshiganj, where 3,500 people were also injured. DHA issued one information report.

Botswana - Floods

Flash floods from heavy rains in late February caused extensive damage in eastern Botswana, especially affecting Mahalapye, Shoshong, Serowe, and Palapye. Preliminary reports show about 20 dead and 2,000 homeless. Most emergency needs have been met locally. The Government established a multi-sectoral task force to carry out a field assessment to work towards reconstruction and rehabilitation. DHA issued two information reports.

Colombia - Earthquakes

DHA issued an information report when, on 19 January, an earthquake of magnitude 6.5 on the Richter scale killed one and injured ten people about 110 km east-northeast of Bogotà.

At 13:40 local time on 8 February, central and south-western Colombia were struck by another earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale. One thousand houses were damaged or destroyed, 34 people were killed, seven were reported missing and more than 200 injured. Most of the damage and casualties concentrated in and around the coffee-processing city of Pereira, 90 miles west of Bogotà. DHA allocated an emergency cash grant of $20,000. DHA's four information reports documented the measures taken by the national system of prevention and care of disasters, which included aerial surveys of the affected areas, the airlifting of medical personnel and medicines, search and rescue activities, and the provision of emergency housing and relief supplies for the homeless.

An information report was issued by DHA on an earthquake of magnitude 5.1, which shook the south-western town of Pasto on Saturday, 4 March, causing eight deaths and partial or total destruction to 51 houses.

Cyprus - Earthquake

On 23 February at 2100 GMT, Cyprus was hit by a moderate earthquake, which occurred about 100 km west of Nicosia. The preliminary magnitude was registered by the United States Geological Survey at 5.8 on the Richter scale. and the quake was followed by a series of five aftershocks affecting mainly the western sector of the island. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Cyprus reported a death toll of two, with 12-15 people injured. Some damage was caused in the region of Paphos. RCB with the assistance of the UNDP Resident Coordinator in Cyprus monitored the situation. The Government did not request international assistance. One information report was issued.

India - Avalanches

A series of avalanches hit the province of Kashmir from 17 January. More than 200 people were killed and at least as many injured. People travelling on a highway leading through the area were especially affected, and many were trapped in and around the Jawahar tunnel. DHA closely monitored the situation and issued two information reports.

Indonesia - Earthquakes

Three earthquakes shook eastern islands of Indonesia on 20 March. Irian Jaya, Lombok and Bali were affected. Severe damage was reported to public buildings in Irian Jaya. No casualties were reported. DHA issued two information reports.

Japan - Earthquake

On 17 January at 5:46 am local time, an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale hit the city of Kobe and its vicinity. Since the epicentre was close to Kobe and the depth was only 14 kms, this caused unprecedented ground motion in Kobe. The seismic intensity was estimated to be 12 on Modified Mercali Scale in center of Kobe, which brought extensive damage to old houses and buildings and structural damage to elevated railroads and highways. The human toll was put at 5,502 dead, two missing and 41,648 injured. Direct economic damage has been estimated at approximately $100 billion.

Immediately after the earthquake, a DHA desk officer began real-time monitoring of the situation, and issued a series of reports to inform accurately the international community of the situation. The UN Secretary-General sent a message of condolence and expressed the UN system's readiness to offer any necessary assistance. Having sufficient in-country resources, Japan did not ask for international assistance. However many voluntary offers of assistance were made and those which fitted the on-site needs were accepted with gratitude and arranged for delivery to the affected population. DHA issued 10 Information Reports.

DHA sent a fact-finding mission from Geneva to Japan 28 February - 10 March to assess the international response to this earthquake. Since this earthquake hit a modern densely-populated metropolitan area, the relief needs were different from other cases of earthquakes (see article pp 52-55)

Laos - Cholera

In February WHO approached DHA concerning the cholera situation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Cholera is endemic in Lao PDR and there are frequent outbreaks. The country faces serious difficulties in controlling outbreaks due to unsanitary conditions, lack of supplies of drugs and lack of appropriate training in cholera case management. At the request of WHO, DHA issued an appeal for international assistance on 23 February and an update on 23 March. The contributions asked for totalled $375,000 and were addressed directly to WHO. Thus far contributions have amounted to $100,000.

Myanmar - Fires

Collectively, fires represent Myanmar's most menacing natural disasters. The latest, which came just before the monsoon, struck on 27 April in the town of Bago. The town of 120,000 inhabitants is situated 48 km south of the capital Yangon. Three wards (districts) of 745 houses mostly built out of bamboo and wood were completely burnt down. The 4,558 displaced people lost most of their belongings and were evacuated to nearby schools and a monastery. The government, which gave initial assistance supported by the Myanmar Red Cross Society, requested that the UN and other donors assist them to cover the urgent needs of the homeless before the monsoon rains began. DHA assisted with a $40,000 emergency grant transferred to the office of the representative of UNDP for urgent needs and the Japanese government reported to DHA that they have donated blankets water tanks and plastic rolls to the displaced. DHA issued two information reports.

New Zealand - Earthquake

On 6 February at 11:51 local time, an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale hit the east coast of North Island of New Zealand. The quake was felt in Auckland and as far as Christchurch. The affected area was sparsely populated and no casualties were reported. DHA issued one information report.

Paraguay - Floods

In January, the Paraguay river reached its highest level in the last ten years. The level of the Paranà river was also unusually high. Three thousand families were evacuated in the Asuncion region. In the north, 800 fishermen families remained jobless, while more than 1,000 families were evacuated in the south. Cotton crops were affected.

DHA issued an information report.

Philippines - Earthquakes

Five successive earthquakes shook the central Philippines on 21 April. The centre of the most powerful earthquake was near the town of Dolores on the island of Samar 590 km south-east of the capital Manila. The magnitude reported by Golden Colorado reached 7.3 on the Richter scale. Bridges collapsed and some public buildings were damaged. A total of

67 families were affected and five people were reported injured. DHA issued one information report.

Vanuatu - Volcanic Alert

A large steam-burst from the crater of the volcano and seismic activity were reported on the island of Ambae in Vanuatu from early March. Alerted by these signs of possible volcanic activity, the Government completed an operational response plan and placed the island under an alert status and villages within a five km radius on stand-by for an immediate evacuation. DHA issued two information reports. The situation eventually stabilised, and no evacuation took place.

UNDAC's expanding role

DHA has established the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination (UNDAC) Stand-by Team, consisting of emergency management experts who can leave within hours of a disaster to work with local authorities in carrying out assessment and coordination at a disaster site.

In light of the experience gained from the first year of UNDAC operations, DHA has decided to expand the UNDAC system. This will be done through an increase in the number of members in the international UNDAC cadre as well as through the establishment of an UNDAC regional team in Latin America, in order to take full advantage of local assessment capacities and expertise. This pilot project aims at promoting regional cooperation in disaster management.

In early 1995, tasks and modalities for use of the UNDAC regional team in Latin America were defined, and the composition of the regional team was drawn up after the November 1994 planning mission to six Latin American countries (Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Venezuela and Peru). Training and financial requirements were identified and, after receipt of a contribution from the Government of Canada, preparations were pursued for the first workshop of the regional team, held 4 - 10 June in Quito, Ecuador.

MCDA Working Group reports

At a meeting in Vienna in February, a final report was prepared by the Working Group on Training Programmes for the UN Project 213/3 on the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) in international disaster relief. The training modules contained in the report will serve as basis for the MCDA Training Programme to be implemented during 1995-96.

Three officers of DHA assisted the Swedish Rescue Services in the conduct of a training course for military and civil defence rescue personnel under the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace.

Model Agreement on transport of relief goods unveiled

Following recommendations of the 1994 Meeting on Emergency Stockpiles and the 1994 Oslo International Conference on the use of military and civil defense assets (MCDA) in disaster relief operations, DHA has prepared, in cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO), a draft Model Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of a Member State concerning measures to expedite the import, export and transit of relief consignments and possessions of relief personnel in the event of disasters.

The purpose of the document is to provide a legal basis for the wide application by national customs authorities of the existing internationally-agreed measures aimed at facilitating the trans-border movement of disaster relief goods and teams participating in United Nations relief operations.

The first version of the document has been sent for consideration to UN agencies, international and national relief organizations and to the national customs authorities in the countries which are members of WCO. The document is to be discussed also by the Working Party of the WCO Permanent Technical Committee and the Committee itself.

After consideration and approval by the WCO Permanent Technical Committee, the document will be used as a basis for concluding bilateral agreements between the United Nations and interested governments.

Emergency Shipments from Pisa Warehouse

February: In cooperation with the Italian Government, a shipment of 47 tonnes of relief items was sent by sea via Mombasa to Rwanda for the population affected by civil strife.

April: In cooperation with the Italian Government and the Belgian air force (under the provisions of DHA's Military and Civil Defence Assets project, two airlifts totalling 26 tonnes of relief goods were sent to Cape Verde to alleviate the suffering of people on Fogo Island after a volcanic eruption.
In cooperation with the Italian Government, two airlifts of approximately 60 tonnes of relief goods were sent to Burundi for the victims of the civil strife.

Emergency Stockpiles

The Mozambique emergency stockpile project has received additional financing from the Government of Norway to the amount of $159,815. With this fund together with the fund already contributed by the Italian Government, an additional 34,000 beneficiaries will receive non-food relief items by the end of July. The Project will complete its activities by then and will hand over the operations to the Government, including the three warehouses.

Disaster Reduction

Caribbean Hurricane Committee

A DHA staff member undertook a mission to Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, 4 - 12 April in order to represent DHA/IDNDR in the 17th Session of the Caribbean Hurricane Committee (CHC) and inform about DHA's disaster mitigation activities in the Latin America and Caribbean region, addressing hurricane-related problems.

The discussions which took place during this meeting, which was attended by representatives from 30 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean and by many important international organisations, were mainly devoted to hurricane prediction, monitoring, alert and reduction methods and to strengthening regional co-operation. DHA's proposal to hold the 1996 CHC in combination with the regional meeting of the national disaster agencies was unanimously accepted.

Ecuadorian earthquake exercise demonstrates DHA project

Within the framework of the DHA project in Ecuador "Preparedness for and mitigation of earthquake disasters in Guayaquil", a simulation exercise was held on 27 and 28 April in Guayaquil, the country's largest city as well as its economic capital. The exercise was attended by 75 representatives from the Mayor's office, and by the Governor and the Prefect of the Provence of Guayas.

This reflects the positive inroads which DHA has achieved in Ecuador. Furthermore, the DHA project in Ecuador has stimulated the national authorities to integrate the disaster management office into the Mayor's offices of Quito and Guayaquil.

Colombian mission promotes contacts

DHA's Regional Disaster Mitigation Adviser based in Quito, Ecuador, was on mission in Colombia 26 February - 3 March. Besides preparing the 1995 work plan for the DHA Disaster Mitigation Programme in Colombia, establishing a relationship with the new Director General of DHA's partner in disaster mitigation in the country, defining and preparing the project document outline for the extension of the ongoing project 1996 - 1998, and coordinating the preparation of the project report pamphlet on DHA's Disaster Mitigation Programme activities in Colombia for the years 1992 - 1995. One of the mission's main purposes was to promote the realisation of a *Regional Seminar on Earthquake Induced Landslides and Mud Flows* with the Colombian Government and UNDP-Bogotá.

Indonesian partnership signed

DHA will be the implementing partner to the Government of Indonesia in a project titled "Strengthening disaster management in Indonesia, Phase II". This project is a continuation of the UNDP-financed Phase I which was implemented by the former Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator.

The essential new feature of Phase II is the inclusion of two disaster-prone districts in the project's implementation. DHA's role is spelled out in a Letter of Agreement between the Government and DHA. During the three-year implementation period, DHA will provide technical assistance in the form of consultants for hazard mapping, communication and information. DHA will also participate in project reviews and evaluation missions.

Disaster simulation exercise

At a meeting in Geneva, civil defence experts from NATO and from several countries developed plans for a major nuclear accident exercise to take place in Russia in May/June 1995, and coordinated their respective plans for training courses conducted in the framework of Partnership for Peace.

At an April meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, plans were finalised for the nuclear accident exercise. The meeting was co-chaired by Russia and DHA, and attended by representatives of 10 nations and two international organizations.

Thumbs-up for environment unit

At a meeting held in Geneva 16 - 17 January, 24 nations expressed their unanimous support to DHA and UNEP for their work to improve the international capacity to respond to environmental emergencies such as chemical accidents and oil spills.

In their first review of the work of the Joint Envi-

ronment Unit, established by DHA and UNEP last July, national experts attending the inaugural meeting of the Environmental Emergencies Advisory Group welcomed the practical and positive collaboration between the two UN organisations. They declared it the most effective and efficient way of responding to environmental emergencies. The meeting agreed that the multinational mission sent to Russia last year to investigate oil spills was a good example of independent, unbiased back-up assistance that the Unit could provide in occasions when bilateral arrangements were not suitable.

The advisory group also expressed strong support for the Unit's role as the link between requests for assistance and providers of expertise, its activities as an information clearing-house in environmental emergencies and as the focal point within the UN system for countries facing environmental disaster not already covered by existing structures.

The delegates also discussed the harmonisation of focal-point contacts within countries and the framework approach for the development of a UN-wide contingency plan for environmental disasters.

Celebrate the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction

During the 1990s, the United Nations has set aside the second Wednesday of October each year to increase public awareness about measures that countries can take before disaster strikes. The 1995 International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction takes place on Wednesday 11 October. This year's theme is "Women and Children - Key to Prevention".

IDNDR Day is coordinated from Geneva by the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, located in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Most IDNDR Day activities, however, take place in countries around the world. National government agencies often play a major role, as do IDNDR national committees, which exist in most countries around the world.

The IDNDR Secretariat is encouraging all interested parties to organise local activities to celebrate IDNDR Day 1995. Possibilities include organising roundtables on women and/or children in disasters, using the upcoming booklet for children, *Learning about natural disasters: games and projects for you and your friends* (available in English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Chinese by August), sending success stories to the IDNDR Secretariat for publication, and working with local media to ensure public awareness of IDNDR Day activities.

If you have ideas, want more information or seek contacts in your country, contact: Natalie Domeisen, Promotion Officer, IDNDR Secretariat, UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: (41.22) 798.68.94 Fax: (41.22) 733.68.95. E-mail: dhagva@un.org

MAPFRE Foundation/DHA Research Grants for Post-graduates

With the objective of following activities related to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the MAPFRE Foundation, along with DHA, the International Institute of Earthquake Prediction Theory and the Latin American Association of Seismic Engineering, is offering four endowments to postgraduates worldwide. The development grants, of one million Spanish Pts each, are intended to be used for one-year research projects. Applicants must be postgraduates who have finished their studies since 1 January, 1991, and applications should be submitted before 31 December, 1995. Applicants will be informed by March 1996 and the research commencement date is set at 1 April, 1996.

In 1990 and 1994, the MAPFRE Foundation and DHA collaborated with other institutions to provide grants for studies of the seismic risks in Argentina and Portugal, and ways to reduce natural disasters in Latin America, Spain and Portugal.

Humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies

Afghanistan

Life in Kabul has changed dramatically during the first months of 1995. In January people were still leaving the city to escape the cold winter and sporadic fighting, between 9 and 20 March heavy and destructive fighting shook the city, but since 20 March the situation has been calm, with Kabul under the control of a single military force.

About 75,000 people had returned from Jalalabad and Pakistan by the end of May. Some of them have moved into parts of the city which had been virtually abandoned for the past two years. However, a deadly hidden menace lies in wait for the returnees. Anti-personnel mines have been laid in many of the most contested areas. As soon as the fighting was over, people started to return to look at their old homes. During April Kabul hospitals dealt with 300 victims of landmines and unexploded ordnance each week.

DHA's in-country coordination office, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) immediately began an emergency demining programme. This included broadcasting mine awareness messages, a city-wide survey of mined areas and an emergency mine clearance programme using demining teams diverted from tasks in the rural areas. The survey has so far identified 142 mine fields covering 14 square kilometres. By the end of May 2.3 square kilometres had been marked and prepared for clearance and 0.8 square kilometres had been cleared. Over 500 deminers from NGOs cooperating with UNOCHA are working on the task, but progress is painfully slow in areas where the mines may be buried in piles of rubble. Nevertheless the mine awareness messages have had a dramatic impact on the casualty rates. Latest figures indicate that mine casualties referred to hospitals in Kabul are down to about ten per week.

While demining work is going on, UN agencies and NGOs are focusing on repairs to the water supply systems, sanitation, food aid (over half the population is malnourished), health care, emergency shelter materials, and efforts to revive the collapsed education system.

The evolution of the situation in Kabul has shifted attention away from the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Jalalabad, which still support nearly 300,000 people. While some have already left the camps to return to Kabul, most are still cautious about returning to a city where their homes are in ruins and they may risk their lives on landmines.

Photo: J. Fakhouri/UNHCR

Scarce resources stretched

While the UN agencies do not wish to force people to leave the camps in these circumstances, the competition for scarce resources means that priority is increasingly being given to the "Peace Emergency" in Kabul. Food aid in the camps is being reduced and non-food items previously earmarked for the camps in Jalalabad are being used to assist people returning to Kabul, with the agreement of a number of donors.

In April UNOCHA conducted a series of workshops in Kabul and Peshawar to review progress on the present Consolidated Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, which runs from October 1994 to September 1995. The NGOs and UN agencies which participated in the meetings also set revised priorities for the second half of the appeal period. Particular attention will be given to the needs in Kabul, to IDPs, and to the return of refugees from neighbouring countries, which is expected to be at a higher level than in 1994. Following this review process UNOCHA has issued a "Mid-term review of the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal". Of the total funding requirement of US$ 121.8 million, pledges and contributions totalling US$ 61.6 million (51 percent) have so far been received. Of the US$ 60.2 million still required, $28.4 million is for food aid, $15.3 million for voluntary repatriation, $7.4 million for health programmes, and $6.2 million for demining. New contributions are therefore still urgently required.

Iraq
Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme

During the first four months of 1995, the humanitarian situation in Iraq deteriorated further, particularly in the health and food/nutrition sectors. In the central and southern governorates, prices of food and other essential commodities continued to rise while average salaries remain in the vicinity of Iraqi Dinars 3,500 per month (equivalent to the price of two kg of meat or one kg of milk powder).

From 15 to 25 January, two DHA officers from New York went to Iraq to assess the humanitarian situation in the northern and central governorates and to identify priority sectors and requirements in preparation of the next Consolidated Appeal for Iraq (1 April 1995 - 31 March 1996). On 19 and 20 January, the DHA team, led by the Humanitarian Coordinator, travelled to the Erbil and Dohuk governorates to review the Programme's activities and to discuss preliminary inputs for the Appeal with concerned UN agency/NGO representatives. Upon its arrival in Erbil, the team was confronted with a complex security situation whereby the two main political parties were actively engaged in a power struggle for the the control of the city and other key strategic positions. The DHA team met separately with the two party leaders and managed to obtain the re-instatement of water and electricity supplies and the resumption of relief and commercial convoys, under the close monitoring of UN Guards. A cease-fire has since been concluded between the two parties and extended until early June 1995.

During its visit to Erbil, the DHA team was informed of the ambush of a CARE International convoy near Dokkan (some 80 kms from Erbil), resulting in the death of one local staff member and the wounding of six others, who were evacuated to the Suleimaniyah Hospital and assisted by UN Guards. The CARE representative announced that its organization would terminate its activities in the northern governorates by the end of March but would remain active in the central and southern governorates.

Health conditions still critical

The team also undertook a visit to Saddam City, within greater Baghdad. Accompanied by the DHA Deputy Coordinator for Iraq and a UNICEF representative, the team visited a hospital, a central water tank and pumping station, a local fruit and vegetable market, as well as a primary school. The health situation in the hospital was critical, with a lack of essential medicines and equipment. The primary school had no electricity or heating and was not supplied with basic items such as paper or pencils. The water tank and pumping station (meant to cover half of the Saddam City area) was out of order due to lack of spare parts.

On 23 January, the team proceeded to Kerbala and Najaf, primarily to assess the health and water/sanitation situation in the area. The situation at the Kerbala hospital was similar to that of the Saddam City hospital, i.e. in critical need of basic/essential drugs and equipment. The team also visited a water purification plant, a sewage treatment plant and a primary health care centre in the Najaf rural area. Common problems were found at the two plants, i.e. a lack of spare parts to operate the facilities (in particular pumps) and chlorinators/chlorine to adequately purify drinking water and treat sewage.

In February, a joint UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) mission to Iraq reported a critical increase in environmental pollution resulting from deteriorating water supply and sanitation facilities and services. The mission found that wastewater treatment facilities in eight medium-size cities in the central/southern governorates have virtually ceased to provide services, and that no central treatment facilities were operating in small towns and rural areas. In Baghdad, wastewater facilities were running at 30 percent of their normal capacity.

As a result of the Turkish incursion of 19 March to northern Iraq, major internal displacements of populations have been reported in the Dohuk governorate. In spite of their reduced numbers, UN Guards supported UNHCR in escorting thousands of Turkish Kurd refugees from the Zakho area to two refugee camps situated near Atrush (Dohuk governorate).

Besides providing overall support services and field coordination, the Office of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq continued to support resettlement activities in northern Iraq (in partnership with Oxfam and with in-kind assistance from OFDA and funds from a Swedish contribution received in 1994).

Financial situation dire

Response to the April 1994 - March 1995 Consolidated Appeal has been inadequate. By the end of the appeal period, $146 million, or approximately 51 percent of overall programme requirements, had been covered by allocations of Escrow Account "matching" funds, voluntary contributions and by carry-over from the previous phase.

In view of the need for continued humanitarian assistance throughout the country, the United Nations launched on 21 March in Geneva, a new Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal at a Donor Consultation Meeting on Iraq. The Programme, which calls for a total of $183.3 million, is designed to address only the most essential needs to sustain relief and rehabilitation activities as well as to prevent a further deterioration of the conditions affecting the most vulnerable population groups throughout the country.

Photo: G. Putman-Cramer/DHA

Key sectors covered in the new appeal include health, water and sanitation, food aid and the reduction of malnutrition, education and agricultural support, as well as assistance to returnees/refugees, including shelter and resettlement of internally displaced families.

Since 1 April, approximately $12 million has been pledged/received in support of UN-directed activities in Iraq. In addition, a number of direct contributions have been made in support of humanitarian NGOs and bilateral programmes in northern Iraq. In March, the Government of Turkey announced an in-kind contribution of $12 million, mainly aimed at the supply of electricity in the Dohuk governorate and the distribution of relief items (mainly food) for the population in northern Iraq.

UN Guards Contingent in Iraq (UNGCI)

Between 1 January and 30 April, due to continued funding difficulties, the strength of the United Nations Guards Contingent in Iraq was reduced from 85 to 61 Guards. Under the new Appeal, some $10 million is required to maintain the Contingent at the operational level of 150 Guards for one year. Also, additional personnel must be identified/sponsored to replace those currently departing. UNGCI is providing protection to a total of over 4,000 UN/NGO staff in the northern governorates.

In order to address the urgent issue of funding of the Guards, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs convened two meetings in New York in April. Pledges amounting to $4.5 million were made by Denmark, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.

DHA

Newly Independent States (NIS)

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

The cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh, concluded on 12 May 1994 between Armenia and Azerbaijan, has continued to hold although the situation in border areas remains tense. Following an agreement reached by the OSCE in December, the modalities for placing a multi-national peace-keeping force in the disputed territory came under study. Failure to resolve issues related to the Comprehensive Political Agreement, also brokered by the OSCE, has slowed down the process of repatriation and resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

Tensions in the Abkhazia region of Georgia remain high in the absence of progress on political talks to resolve the status of the disputed region. Discussions, within the legal framework established under the Quadripartite Commission, have faltered on the organised return of up to 30,000 displaced persons to the Gali region. The Abkhaz authorities continue to withhold thousands of other applications due to the lack of progress on the peace negotiations. By the end of 1994, UNHCR has assisted 311 IDPs to return to Abkhazia, while an unknown number of informal repatriations also occured.

A United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Caucasus, covering 1 April 1995 - 31 March 1996, was launched in Geneva on 23 March. The Appeal calls for $118.1 million in funding, of which $13.4 million (16.2 percent) had been pledged/contributed by 28 April. Donor contributions for programmes under the previous Appeal amounted to $77.3 million out of the $123.9 million requested, covering 75.8 percent of requirements for Azerbaijan, 71.3 percent for Armenia and 50.1 percent for Georgia. The latest Appeal is based on the results of a needs assessment mission conducted January-February by a DHA-led Inter-Agency Mission.

The humanitarian situation in all three countries has been affected by severe economic problems, civil unrest and large population displacements. They are suffering political and economic instability and a lack of foreign exchange for essential inputs, hyper-inflation and a contraction in food production. In particular, the continued delay in re-settling IDPs in all three countries has made it more difficult for their economies to recover, as well as exacerbating social and political tensions. In Azerbaijan, official government statistics put the total number of IDPs and refugees from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh at 890,000. Armenia is host to 380,000 refugees from Azerbaijan, while Georgia has 280,000 IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The 1995-1996 humanitarian programme for the region will address the immediate needs of vulnerable groups, as well as contingency planning (in the event of the voluntary return of IDPs). Relief projects will be undertaken by UN agencies and NGOs in the food, non-food, shelter, education and health sectors, as well as capacity building projects for regional governments and projects bridging the continuum from emergency assistance to development.

DHA Field Coordination Units have been established in all three countries in August 1994 in response to donor appeals for the creation of an umbrella inter-agency body to ensure a coordinated approach among all concerned parties for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Photo: A. Hollmann/UNHCR

Chechnya

In response to the request of the Government of the Russian Federation for assistance to the population displaced from Chechnya, a United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Persons Displaced as a Result of the Emergency Situation in Chechnya was launched in Geneva on 23 March.

The Appeal covers a six-month period, 1 January to 30 June, and addresses the humanitarian needs of approximately 220,000 beneficiaries at a total cost of $22.9 million. The Appeal subsumes and expands upon the interim "Flash Appeal" for Chechnya issued in February, to which the response of the international donor community was negligible. Only $1.9 million was pledged for humanitarian assistance, covering some eight percent of original requirements.

DHA maintains a presence in the region through the assignment of a Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer to the office of the DHA Coordinator in Moscow. A DHA Logistics Officer has also been recruited for attachment to WFP operations in Daghestan. The committal of personnel resources by DHA to the affected regions will ensure that an on-going assessment and monitoring of the evolving needs of displaced populations in the north Caucasus will be maintained over the short to medium term.

Photo B. Norstrom UNHCR

Tajikistan

The negotiating process, which has attempted to bring political stability to Tajikistan, has been stalled since the third round of Inter-Tajik talks, held in Islamabad in October 1994. From the beginning of 1995, a number of factors have impeded the political process that the United Nations is trying to promote in Tajikistan. The situation remains tense, particularly on the border with Afghanistan where security incidents have been increasingly reported.

On an encouraging note, consultations between the Russian Federation, the Government of Tajikistan and the Tajik Opposition in February and March led to an extension of the cease-fire agreement until 26 April. Progress was also made in addressing some of the preconditions laid down by the opposition to the holding of the next round of Inter-Tajik talks. Many issues

Photo: G. Putman-Cramer DHA

remained unresolved until April, when discussions led by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Amb. Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, resulted in consultations in Moscow under the auspices of the United Nations, 19-26 April. As a result of these consultation, both sides reconfirmed their commitment to settling the conflict and achieving national reconciliation. President Rakhmonov and the leader of the Tajik opposition agreed to meet in Kabul before the fourth round of the Inter-Tajik Talks in Almaty on 22 May. Agreement was also reached on measures to enlarge and strengthen the role of the Joint Commission, comprising representatives from both groups.

The United Nations Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Tajikistan has therefore continued to be implemented against a backdrop of political uncertainty. During 1994, the humanitarian community endeavoured to address the most pressing needs in Tajikistan. However, the deterioration has continued in 1995, particularly in the areas of Pyanj, Garm and Gorno-Badakhshan. Vulnerable groups continue to rely on emergency relief assistance, including food aid and other assistance such as shelter, water and sanitation, medicines, clothing, shoes, soap and school kits. Capacity and confidence-building activities, initiated in 1994 by the UN, IOM and NGOs, also targeted areas of return of former refugees and IDPs and have proven to facilitate reintegration and peaceful cohabitation. More than 60 percent of the $42.5 million requested in the 1994 appeal was pledged/contributed.

The Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for Tajikistan for 1995 was officially presented to donors on 23 March in Geneva. The current appeal requests $37.3 million to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs in-country of some 600,000 people who have been most seriously affected by conflict, population movements and the deterioration of the economic, health and social infrastructures. It aims to provide emergency food aid, together with assistance in the health, water and sanitation, and eduction sectors. This assistance targets the most vulnerable including pensioners, invalids and widows with children, as well as returned and displaced people.

Emphasis in the 1995 humanitarian programme is also on information management and capacity building, with programmes aiming to assist in the training of health workers, community development, capacity and confidence-building, and self-reliance activities. The present Appeal covers a number of NGO initiatives in addition to UN agencies in an effort to enhance coordination and cooperation among humanitarian partners in the field.

As of 31 May, appealing agencies had reported to DHA contributions of $18.7 million, representing just over half of funding requirements. The programme has been affected by financial constraints which have seen sectors such as health, water and sanitation and capacity building largely underfunded.

DHA

Disaster Management Training Programme

The Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP), managed jointly by DHA and UNDP has been running successfully since mid-1990. The Programme was launched in response to the oft- repeated need for a broad international effort to bring coherent training to the management of natural or human-made disasters as well as complex emergencies. DMTP provides workshops at a managerial level for broad audiences including UN and country authorities, national and international NGOs, donors and other actors in emergencies and disasters.

The main objectives of the Programme are to:

- raise awareness and provide a framework for worldwide disaster management training;
- formulate a series of catalytic activities to mitigate the impact of disasters;
- improve field coordination by increasing actors' cohesion and professionalism in emergency management;
- assist in building national capacity in emergency management;
- develop a general understanding of the subject as forming part of a continuum in which development and disasters are closely linked.

Fifty percent of the participants in DMTP events are nationals of developing countries, 20 percent are from non-governmental organizations (local and international), 10 percent are bilateral donor staff and 20 percent are UN-system staff. About 30 percent of the country workshops are conducted in the least developed countries. DMTP has delivered 44 country and six regional workshops.

Activities in 1995

- **Asia:** A programming mission was undertaken to Papua New Guinea in preparation for the national workshop scheduled for May.
- **Africa:** A DMTP country workshop was held in Eritrea in February. Programming missions have been undertaken in Mozambique (workshop scheduled for 19-23 June) and in South Africa. Programming missions are also scheduled as follows: Morocco and Tunisia in May and Madagascar and Zaire in June. Cooperation between DMTP and the Union of the Arab Maghreb is also being explored.
- **Latin America:** A country workshop was held in Cuba in January.
- **Europe:** A programming mission to Azerbaijan was completed in April (the country workshop will be conducted 5 - 9 June). New links in cooperation with the CIS Interstate Council on Natural and Technological Emergencies were also established during the programming mission.

Training Materials

Requests for DMTP training materials should be sent to the Disaster Management Training Programme at DHA (DMTP fax no. +41-22 788 8221). The first edition in English, French and Spanish of most of the modules is now available. The second edition of *Disaster Assessment, Disasters and Development, Disaster Economics, Disaster Mitigation, Disaster Preparedness, Drought and Famine,* and *Vulnerability and Risk Assessment* has now been published in English.

Three additional training modules and trainer's guides were completed: *Logistics; Rehabilitation and Reconstruction;* and *Humanitarian Principles and Operational Dilemmas in War Zones.* A new training module, *Disaster Ethics,* is being developed. The second draft of the *Resettlement of Displaced Persons* is complete.

DHA-GENEVA Relief Coordination Branch

1995 Natural Disasters Involvement (as of 30 June 1995)

	Date Started	Affected Country/ Region	Disaster	No. of Sit/Inf reports issued*	Contributions reported to DHA	Contributions channelled through DHA	DHA/ UNDAC mis-sions	DHA airlifts/ ship-ments**	Latest Report Date
1	16 Jan	Japan	Earthquake	Inf 10	13,517,021		X		10 Feb
2	20 Jan	India/Kashmir	Avalanches	Inf 2					25 Jan
3	20 Jan	Colombia	Earthquake	Inf 1					20 Jan
4	02 Feb	New Zealand	Earthquake	Inf 1					02 Feb
5	08 Feb	Colombia	Earthquakes	Inf 5	20,000	20,000			10 Feb
6	24 Feb	Cyprus	Earthquake	Inf 1					24 Feb
7	01 Mar	Botswana	Floods	Inf 2	190,476				21 Mar
8	06 Mar	Colombia	Earthquake	Inf 1					06 Mar
9	10 Mar	Vanuatu	Volcanic alert	Inf 2					17 Mar
10	20 Mar	Indonesia-Irian Jaya	Earthquake	Inf 2					21 Mar
11	31 Mar	Afghanistan	Landslides	Inf 3	34,500	30,000			30 Jun
12	31 Mar	Paraguay	Floods	Inf 1					31 Mar
13	04 Apr	Cape Verde	Volcanic Eruption	Sit 6	551,199	414,000	X	2	08 May
14	10 Apr	Argentina	Storms	Inf 1					10 Apr
15	12 Apr	Bangladesh	Storms	Inf 1					12 Apr
16	21 Apr	Philippines	Earthquake	Inf 1					21 Apr
17	27 Apr	Russian Federation	Gas explosion	Inf 1					27 Apr
18	28 Apr	Myanmar	Fire outbreak	Inf 3	176,670	50,000			26 May
19	05 May	Indonesia	Floods	Inf 2					12 May
20	10 May	Sri Lanka	Floods	Inf 1					10 May
21	10 May	Bangladesh	Rainstorms/Tidal surge	Inf 3					22 May
22	19 May	Ethiopia	Floods	Sit 2	612,225	552,225		2	07 Jun
23	26 May	Indonesia	Earthquakes	Inf 1					26 May
24	28 May	Russian Federation/Sakhalin Island	Earthquake	Sit 11	4,345,253	634,795	X	1	27 Jun
25	30 May	Tanzania	Floods	Inf 1					30 May
26	07 Jun	Paraguay	Floods	Sit 1	130,645	50,000			07 Jun
27	07 Jun	Cuba	Storm/Hurricanes	Inf 1					08 Jun
28	15 Jun	Greece	Earthquake	Sit 4			X	2	21 Jun
29	16 Jun	Azerbaijan	Torrential Rains	Sit 2					27 Jun
30	19 Jun	Bangladesh	Floods	Inf 5	126,198				30 Jun
31	20 Jun	Nepal	Landslides	Inf 2					30 Jun

Total number of International Appeals:	**6**
Total number of reports issued:	**80**
Total contributions reported to DHA to-date:	**19,704,187**
Total contributions channelled through DHA to-date:	**1,751,020**

* Sit: Situation Report(International Appeal), Inf: Information Report

**Additional airlifts&shipments to Algeria, Burundi, Djibouti and Rwanda were organised from DHA Pisa Warehouse this year

Publications

Recent DHA Documents

Facilitation of international transport of relief items

DHA has published an information document "Recommended measures in international transport which can facilitate delivery of international emergency humanitarian assistance". It has been prepared by DHA in response to the identified needs of providers of international relief assistance.

The purpose of the document is to bring to the attention of all parties concerned the existing internationally-agreed special provisions which are intended or can be applied to facilitate the trans-boundary movement of disaster relief goods and of disaster management teams and equipment by air, sea or rail.

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Another information paper "Facilitation measures in customs conventions which can expedite delivery of international emergency humanitarian assistance" has been published.Both documents are available in English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Free copies can be obtained upon request from the Information and Publication Unit of DHA's Geneva office.

Emergency Stockpiles

The DHA *Study on Emergency Stockpiles*, containing an analysis of the existing emergency stockpiles and proposals on ways and means to improve their operational capacity, is now available in English, French, Russian and Spanish. It has been distributed to the UNDP Offices in 136 countries and to about 120 documentation centres and libraries around the world. Free copies are available from the Information and Publication Unit of DHA in Geneva.

UNDAC Field Handbook

The first version of the UNDAC Field Handbook has recently been issued. The Field Handbook is intended as a quick reference guide for DHA Relief Coordination Officers and members of an UNDAC Team before and during a mission to an area affected by an emergency. The handbook represents an accumulation of institutional memory related to procedures for international emergency assessment and coordination, within the scope of the UNDAC terms of reference. It includes information on the mobilization and despatch of an UNDAC Team, disaster assessment, relief coordination, reporting and DHA resources. It also contains reference material on hazards, assessment, urban search and rescue, disaster logistics, health issues, United Nations and international response organizations. Distribution limited.

Other publications

Relief and Rehabilitation Network

Network Papers

The RRN Network Papers are contributions on specific experiences or issues prepared either by Network Members or contributing specialists.

Network Paper 1	*Mozambique: A data collecting system forced on food security and population movements*
Network Paper 2	*Responding to the 1991/92 drought in Zambia: the programme to prevent malnutrition (PPM)*
Network Paper 3	*An account of relief operations in Bosnia*
Network Paper 4	*Bad borders make bad neighbours: the politicla economy of relief and rehabilitation in the Somali region 5, eastern Ethiopia*
Network Paper 5	*Advancing preventive diplomacy in a post-Cold War era: suggested roles for governments and NGOs*

Network Paper 6	*The Rwandan refugee crisis in Tanzania: initial successes and failures in food assistance*
Network Paper 7	*Code of conduct for the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster relief*
Network Paper 8	*Targeting the poor in northern Iraq: the role of formal and informal research methods in relief operations*
Network Paper 9	*Development in conflict: the experience of ACORD in Uganda, Sudan, Mali and Angola*

Good Practice Reviews

The RRN Good Practice Reviews are commissioned reviews prepared by recognised specialists on different sectors or activities within the relief and rehabilitation field in a format that is readily accessible by field personnel. The primary purpose of such Reviews is to bring Network Members up to date with the latest developments in knowledge and techniques. The secondary benefit is to encourage debate between members deriving from their own perceptions of the 'good practice' and on the merits of different approaches and techniques.

Practice review 1	*Water and sanitation in emergencies*
Practice review 2	*Emergency supplemental feeding programmes*

Newsletters

The RRN News letter contain information on recent developments in the international relief system, reports on meetings and conferences, brief reviews of recent publications and reports, summaries of alerts produced by early warning and crisis information systems, information on training courses and a calendar of forthcoming meetings and conferences.

No 1 (March 1994) News items included:

- *ECHO Initiative to Establish a European Degree Course in International Humanitarian Aid;*
- *Support Network for Relief Workers Returning from Zones of Conflict;*
- *US NGOs Attempt to Improve their War Risk Insurance Cover;*
- *ACC/SCN Sets up a Refugee Nutrition Information System in Conjunction with International NGOs;*
- *The IDNDR - for the Unitiated.*

No 2 (September 1994)

- *Broutros-Ghali Accepts UN's Limitations;*
- *Campaigns to Ban Anti-Personnel Mines: What Progress?;*
- *Bernard Kouchner Launches Conflict Prevention Initiative;*
- *Strategies for Aid and Media Agencies in the News Coverage of Humanitarian Emergencies;*
- *NGOs Attending IDNDR World Conference Form "Forum Global";*
- *The Upsurge of Interest in the "Relief-Development Continuum": What Does it Mean?*

No 3 (April 1995)

- *The Auture of Aid: The DAC's View;*
- *Accountability in Disaster Response: Assessing the Impact and Effectiveness of Relief Assistance;*
- *Military Humanitarism: for Multi-Donor Evaluation;*
- *EU Wants Higher Profile for Humanitarian Aid;*
- *Draft Convention on the Safety of UN Associated Personnel.*

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War and Hunger: Rethinking International Approaches to Complex Emergencies, edited by Joanna Macrae and Anthony Zwi, Zed Books - also available from ODI.

These publications are available from:

Relief and Rehabilitation Network
Overseas Development Institute
Regent's College
Inner Circle
Regent's Park
London NW1 4NS
United Kingdom

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